Job Talk

Job talk helps manage the executive dimensions of a task by turning the action you want the child to do into a job and giving it a name. This becomes the child’s “job title” and develops nonverbal working memory and accesses procedural memory by offering an immediate structure and limiting emotional reactions. It supports children to think in pictures and pre-imagine their role and the steps.

To do this we turn a verb into a noun by adding **-er**. For example, a picker, decorator, cleaner, wiper, baker, tooth brusher, bed maker, blogger, scientist, meteorologist, researcher, editor, interviewer, listener. This simple and subtle shift from the verb form of a behavior (“Set the table, please”) to a noun label (“Be a table setter!”) increases motivation. One parent tried to take photos of her children but found they were goofing around. However, when she said “You be the smilers and I will be the photographer she got a beautiful photo of them. Another parent, rather than saying “OK let’s pack your backpack – go and get your water bottle, lunch kit, PE shoe and money for the field trip” managed the executive dimensions of this packing tasks said “I need a packer, a snack preparer, a PE strip finder and a banker”

When we are engaged in jobs we can use “self talk” to describe the thoughts and actions involved in organisation and planning of a task. This makes the organisation and steps in a task or routine explicit to children.

We include temporal concepts for older students related to the tasks e.g. I will dust first and then vacuum so I can vacuum up the dust or I will wash these clothes first because they need longer in the dryer or I need them for tomorrow or I will turn the oven on now so it is ready in 10 minutes for the food to go in. This helps children learn what they need to do over time and across space.

Here are some examples of job titles:

* **Recycling Monitor –** organizes recyclables
* **Chair organizer –** pushes chairs in and positions them at table
* **Door Monitor –** Alerts adult to visitors at the door
* **Librarian -** in charge of the organizing library books for return
* **Energy Monitor -** makes sure to turn off the light when everyone leaves the room
* **Plant Technician-** waters plants
* **Sanitation Worker-** takes the garbage out
* **Animal Trainer -** takes care of pets
* **Adult Assistant -** helps the parents/ adult at any time
* **Calendar Coordinator –** changes calendar every month
* **Ingredient Picker/Locator-** Finds and brings ingredients required
* **Vegetable chopper-** Chops vegetables
* **Pizza Courier-** carries pizza to the table
* **Water pourer-** serves water
* **Table setter-** sets table for dinner
* **Dishwasher stacker –** loads dishwasher
* **Dishwasher unloader –** unloads dishwasher