

BC TradesRoute

Parent Checklist — Trades as a Learning Pathway

A fact-checked checklist for BC parents of high school students exploring the skilled trades. Updated August 2026.

1. SkilledTradesBC Registration

Every apprentice in BC must be registered with **SkilledTradesBC** (formerly the Industry Training Authority). The student receives an Apprentice ID, sometimes still called the Blue Book number. This is the only reason hours count toward a Red Seal.

- Call the district Career Programs Coordinator first.
- Register the student with SkilledTradesBC and get the Apprentice ID.
- Both the employer and student sign the sponsorship form.
- Log hours every month and keep a backup copy.
- Confirm the sponsor is registered with SkilledTradesBC.

2. Double Credit — Two Paths at Once

Students do not have to choose between graduating and starting a trade. Both programs below earn high school credits while the trade begins.

Program	What it is	Credits	Who pays / what it gives
Youth TRAIN in Trades	Level 1 technical training at a partner college while still in high school	16–24	The district pays tuition; the student gets a college-level head start and graduation credits.
Youth WORK in Trades	Paid apprenticeship hours in a registered trade while still in high school	16	The employer pays a wage; the student may apply for the WRK scholarship after 900 hours.

3. The WRK Scholarship

As of July 2024, the old Youth WORK in Trades award has become a **competitive scholarship**. To be eligible, a student must:

- Be registered with SkilledTradesBC as a Youth WORK in Trades apprentice.
- Graduate with a C+ average or better.
- Complete **900 hours** of paid, supervised work related to the registered trade.
- Apply during the application period; if more than 600 students apply, scholarships are awarded based on financial need.

4. Tool Strategy

- Wait for the instructor's list before buying anything.
- Use the college student discount list for 40–50% off professional tools.
- Ask the union or employer about a tool allowance or starter kit first.
- Keep every receipt for the Tradespersons' Tool Deduction.

5. BC Labour Law — Safety on the Job

Young workers are injured at a higher rate in their first six months. These are the legal protections every parent should know.

Topic	What the law says
Section 3.22	Employers must orient and train every young or new worker before work starts, and document it.
Three Rights	Right to know hazards, right to participate in safety discussions, right to refuse unsafe work.
Age rules	Under 16: light work only, with restrictions. Construction sites generally require 16+. Some high-risk work requires 18+.
WorkSafeBC	Student work placements and paid youth apprentices must be covered. Ask who carries the coverage and the account number.
Reprisal	It is illegal for an employer to punish a worker for refusing unsafe work.

6. Federal and Provincial Help

Program	What it is
Federal Apprenticeship Incentive Grant	\$1,000 after Level 1 and \$1,000 after Level 2 of a Red Seal trade.
Federal Apprenticeship Completion Grant	\$2,000 when the Red Seal apprenticeship is completed.
BC Training Tax Credit	Provincial tax credits at completion milestones, with enhanced amounts for eligible First Nations individuals and people with disabilities.
Tradespersons' Tool Deduction	Federal tax deduction for tools the apprentice must buy and the employer does not reimburse.

7. From a Red Seal to a Degree

A Red Seal is not the ceiling. Three BC universities grant credit toward a bachelor's degree:

University	Program	Credit for a Red Seal
Thompson Rivers University	Bachelor of Technology (Trades & Technology Leadership)	Up to 45 credits for a 3-year trade; up to 60 credits for a 4-year trade.
BCIT	Bachelor of Technology (Technology Management)	Builds on trades and technology credentials plus industry experience.
UFV	Bachelor of Business Administration (Trades Management)	Apprenticeship technical training counts toward the BBA.

8. High-Opportunity Trades in BC

WorkBC identifies these trades as high opportunity in the current labour market outlook. Specific rankings change, but the trades below are consistently in demand.

Trade	Hours to Red Seal
Electricians	6,000
Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanics	6,000
Carpenters	6,720
Plumbers / Steamfitters	6,000
Welders	4,500

Why this site exists

I built BC TradesRoute because I could not find a single place that put the legal, financial, school and safety pieces together for parents like me. My daughter finished Grade 12 with her diploma, money in the bank, membership in Local 280, and real experience as a welder, electrician and sheet metal worker. The trade pathway works. I hope this checklist makes it easier for your family to navigate than it was for ours.

Disclaimer: amounts, deadlines and program rules change. Confirm every detail with SkilledTradesBC, the school district Career Programs Coordinator, and the official BC government website before acting on this checklist.