

Talking with students about trades

A one-pager for high school counselors. Skilled trades are a career path — not a consolation prize. Keep the conversation factual and student-led.

Openers that work

- “What kind of workday sounds good — classroom, shop, outdoors, or mixed?”
- “Would you rather earn while you learn, or finish a certificate first?”
- “Which trades have you actually seen people do in our area?”

Myths to gently correct

- **“Trades are only for kids who can’t do college.”** Many apprenticeships are selective and technical. College and trades are not opposites.
- **“Apprenticeship means unpaid intern.”** Registered apprenticeships are paid employment with related instruction.
- **“There’s one best school.”** Prefer verifiable sponsors and state-approved programs over rankings.

Point them to

- registeredtradeschools.com — state sponsor directory + neutral guides
- apprenticeship.gov — official finder
- Parents: the parent guide on our site (for families of adults 18–25)

This handout is not a CTE course catalog. It supports counseling conversations about postsecondary trade paths.