

# Keeping your kids safe at work: A guide for parents



## Orientation and training is a must

- Employers are required to provide a safety orientation and training to their workers before the start of a new job or task, or before operating a new piece of equipment.
- Employers must keep records of all orientation and training that they provide.
- Employers must provide additional orientation and training if a worker requests it.

**Every day, young people are injured in jobs you may not consider to be risky — while working as cashiers, retail clerks, cooks, and servers, for example.**

As a parent, you're in a unique position to positively influence how your kids think about their safety at work. Sharing your own knowledge and experiences with your kids can help them establish safe attitudes and behaviours that will benefit them in any job.

Talking to your kids when they're young makes it easier for them to see the link between the workplace and safety. For example, you probably already tell them why it's important to wear helmets while biking. Now, the next time you and your kids pass a construction site, explain how, just like bike helmets keep them safe, hard hats and other protective equipment are essential to keeping workers safe.

While the ultimate responsibility for workers' health and safety lies with their employers, everyone has a role to play in keeping young workers safe. You can be a powerful role model, so be sure to "walk the talk" and show your child that you take safety seriously yourself. Help your kids advocate for their own safety by reminding them that they have rights at work.

Under the *Workers Compensation Act* and the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation*, all workers in B.C., including young and new workers, have three key health and safety rights:

- The right to know about hazards in the workplace
- The right to participate in health and safety activities in the workplace
- The right to refuse unsafe work without being punished or fired



Mary and Jessica Kruger

“ I immersed myself in the work of helping Jess cope with her injuries. It took years to discover that I had given so much of myself that there was nothing left.”

**Mary Kruger**

Her 15-year-old daughter, Jessica, fell off a ladder while painting houses and was paralyzed for life.

## Tools and tips for parents

Think back to your first job and how inexperienced you felt. You may have been afraid to ask questions or raise safety concerns. Even if your kids haven't started working yet, here are some things you can do to help them prepare for the workplace:

- Visit [worksafefbc.com/youngworkers](https://worksafefbc.com/youngworkers) together. You'll find a variety of resources on workplace safety, including real-life stories, videos, web books, and slide shows. Discuss the things you both learn about how to prepare for the workplace.
- Connect them with someone you know who works, or has worked, in the industry your kids may be working in. That person is likely to have valuable insights to share.
- Encourage them to ask questions about safety during job interviews. The answers may be a good indication of the safety culture in that particular workplace.
- Make sure they know what their health and safety rights are and how to exercise them.

## How to support your child if an injury happens

- Employers must ensure they have proper first aid procedures in place for their workplace. If your child sees a doctor for an injury that happened at work, make sure the doctor knows that it's work-related.
- Employers need to report workplace injuries or illnesses to WorkSafeBC within three days.
- Even if an injury seems minor, your child should file a WorkSafeBC claim as soon as possible. If time off is needed due to an injury, have your child phone Teleclaim at 1.888.WORKERS. More information about how to file a claim is available on [worksafebc.com/claims](https://www.worksafebc.com/claims).
- Remember, it's against the law for employers to tell workers not to file a claim or to try talking them out of it.

Once your kids have started working, you can help them keep safety “top of mind” by asking them the following questions:

- Have they received health and safety training and orientation? If not, ask them to talk to their supervisor.
- Do they understand the safe work procedures for their tasks at work? Ask them for examples of what they do and how they are supposed to do it.
- Are safety meetings or toolbox talks held regularly at their workplace? What topics are discussed and what have they learned from them?
- Do they know who to talk to if they have a safety concern at work?
- Do they know what to do if they are injured on the job?

Even if your kids feel comfortable in their jobs, continue to emphasize safety in the following ways:

- Encourage them to participate in health and safety in their workplaces. This could mean asking questions during safety meetings or joining their company's joint health and safety committee if there is one.
- Remind them to “listen to their gut” and trust their instincts. If they are asked to do anything that feels unsafe, suggest that they check with their supervisor before proceeding.
- Talk to them about the dangers of working while they are tired, distracted (on their phone, for example), taking medication, or under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Reassure them that even if they've been trained to do something, it's only human to forget, so they should ask questions rather than risk injury.

## Focus on industries

Industry	Examples of common jobs for young workers	How young workers are getting hurt	Most common types of injuries
Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trade helpers and labourers</li> <li>Carpenters</li> <li>Electricians and plumbers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being struck by something (e.g., falling building material)</li> <li>Overexertion</li> <li>Falling from heights (e.g., off a ladder)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strained muscles</li> <li>Serious cuts and bruises</li> <li>Broken bones</li> </ul>
Manufacturing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welders and machine operators</li> <li>Labourers</li> <li>Material handlers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being struck by something (e.g., moving parts of machinery)</li> <li>Overexertion</li> <li>Being caught in machinery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strained muscles</li> <li>Serious cuts and bruises</li> <li>Broken bones</li> </ul>
Retail and wholesale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Salespersons</li> <li>Shelf stockers, clerks, and order fillers</li> <li>Material handlers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overexertion</li> <li>Being struck by something (e.g., falling stock stored on high shelves)</li> <li>Falling from heights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strained muscles</li> <li>Serious cuts and bruises</li> <li>Concussions</li> </ul>
Service sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food counter attendants and kitchen helpers</li> <li>Cooks</li> <li>Restaurant servers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being struck by something (e.g., being cut by a knife)</li> <li>Overexertion</li> <li>Falling on the same level (e.g., slipping on wet floor)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strained muscles</li> <li>Serious cuts and bruises</li> <li>Heat burns</li> </ul>
Transportation and warehousing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Material handlers</li> <li>Air transport ramp attendants</li> <li>Transport truck drivers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overexertion</li> <li>Being struck by something (e.g., mobile equipment)</li> <li>Falling from heights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strained muscles</li> <li>Serious cuts and bruises</li> <li>Broken bones</li> </ul>

## Refusing unsafe work

- Every worker in B.C. has the right to refuse unsafe work.
- It's illegal for employers to punish or fire anyone for refusing unsafe work or reporting hazards to a supervisor.
- If your kids feel an unsafe situation hasn't been resolved, even after they've discussed it with their supervisor and workplace safety representative, they can contact WorkSafeBC (anonymously, if they prefer) by calling 604.276.3100 in the Lower Mainland or toll-free at 1.888.621.7233.

Some industries have specific health and safety concerns so it's valuable for you as a parent to know what kinds of questions to ask. Below are some examples of industry-specific questions to chat with your kids about:

- **Construction** — Has their employer provided them with all the personal protective equipment required for their job? Does the equipment fit them and work well?
- **Food service industry** — Have they been trained in knife safety and housekeeping to prevent cuts as well as slips, trips, and falls in the kitchen?
- **Manufacturing** — Were they shown how to lock out the equipment they work on? Do they understand safeguarding and how it protects them?
- **Retail and wholesale** — Do they understand how to lift and handle items properly in the storeroom to avoid injuring themselves?
- **Transportation and warehousing** — Have they been trained on how to safely operate a company vehicle? What are the safe work procedures for using their own vehicle for work purposes? If they operate mobile equipment, have they been trained on how to operate it safely?

For more information and resources on how you can help keep your kids safe on the job, visit [worksafebc.com/youngworkers](https://www.worksafebc.com/youngworkers) and [worksafebc.com/ListenToYourGut](https://www.worksafebc.com/ListenToYourGut).



“ I don’t think any parent wants to get that phone call in the middle of the night... I could only imagine that it was pretty serious or he would’ve called me himself.”

– **Kate Rowbottom**  
Her 18-year-old son, Michael, lost his leg in a sawmill accident.

## Contact us

If you have any safety questions or concerns, call our Prevention Information Line at 604.276.3100 in the Lower Mainland, or toll-free at 1.888.621.7233. If you have a general question, please email [yworker@worksafebc.com](mailto:yworker@worksafebc.com).

