Your Child Wants to be a Hardscape Professional?
What Parents Should Know

If your son or daughter has an interest in a career in hardscape construction, that’s great news! When something sparks the passion of a teen, it’s truly exciting. Why does your child want to be a part of this industry? Is it the opportunity to work outdoors? Or maybe the pride and satisfaction of building a project from start to finish? The hardscape industry offers the opportunity for individuals to create something unique and offers excellent pay without mounting college debt. Here’s what awaits your child as a hardscape professional.

A Growing Industry
The hardscape industry is booming. Manufacturers are producing 663 million square feet of segmental concrete pavers and retaining wall products each year in the United States. These products are installed by thousands of hardscape professionals working in residential, commercial, industrial and municipal settings. More and more people are investing in hardscapes to add beauty to their outdoor settings, ensuring work for hardscape installers. Employers in the hardscape industry don’t have enough employees to meet demand.

Career Growth
Opportunities in the hardscape industry abound! From installer to designer to entrepreneur, those who have interest, ability and work ethic can grow into almost every position within their companies, including business owner. Some installers even become salespeople and trainers for paver/segmental retaining wall manufacturers, and others go on to pursue degrees in engineering, landscape architecture, or other related fields.

Pay and Benefits that May Surprise You
With entry-level position beginning salaries of approximately $30,000, hardscape professionals can grow into designers, estimators or sales positions paying approximately $50,000. Salaries for management positions are higher, often into the 6 figures. Most professional hardscape companies offer competitive benefits as well.

Pride in Your Work
Hardscape professionals not only create beautiful outdoor spaces, they also help protect the environment. Permeable pavement systems help solve surface runoff problems and filter pollutants from stormwater, protecting both the stormwater infrastructure and the environment.

Work is done in a team environment, providing a strong sense of family in the hardscape company. You work with both your hands and mind as a hardscape professional, and even better, you work in the great outdoors.

For more information on careers in hardscaping, visit educate.icpi.org/contractor-career-path.
Navigating College Choices

Are you considering studying for a career as a hardscape professional? If so, you will want to prioritize college programs that provide you with the foundation to grow your career. There are many two- and four-year programs that offer the foundation for learning about landscape/hardscape construction, management, and business. In addition to the exposure these curricula offer to real-world scenarios in the industry, higher-level studying teaches critical problem-solving skills and stimulates intellectual curiosity that is highly coveted by employers.

There is a high demand for students who graduate with degrees associated with the industry. In fact, most students who study horticulture, landscape management, and other industry-related topics have multiple job offers before graduation. If you want to study to become part of a growing industry where you can be proud of your work, make a positive impact on our environment, and improve the quality of life for customers, explore academic programs that will change your life!

**Things to Consider When Selecting a College to Prepare for a Career as a Hardscape Installer**

- Ensure schools in consideration offer courses in your intended area of study (e.g. horticulture, landscape architecture, landscape management, business, etc.).
- Identify what size school meets your interest and assess the faculty-to-student ratio.
- Understand how you will finance school and what admission support you may require.
- Seek recommendations from those in the industry and talk with current students about their experiences.
- Look for programs that include hands-on and real-world training.
- Evaluate the experience of the faculty.
- Visit the department, staff, and facilities.
- Determine what percentage of students are offered job opportunities before graduation.

For a list of schools offering the Concrete Paver Installer course, visit [educate.icpi.org/contractor-career-path](http://educate.icpi.org/contractor-career-path).
Schools Offering Concrete Paver Installer Curriculum

The number of schools offering Concrete Paver Installer curriculum is growing! Find a school near you.

**British Columbia**
- Pacific Horticulture College

**California**
- Bakersfield College
- Caruthers High School
- Ceres High School
- Cosumnes River College
- Shasta College

**Idaho**
- BYU Idaho

**Illinois**
- College of DuPage

**Maryland**
- Frederick County Public Schools CTC

**Massachusetts**
- Essex North Shore Ag/Tech School

**New Hampshire**
- University of New Hampshire

**New York**
- Attica CSD
- SUNY Cobleskill

**North Carolina**
- Alamance Community College
- Carteret Community College

**Ohio**
- Cuyahoga Community College

**Ontario**
- Algonquin College
- Fanshawe College
- Grey Highlands Secondary School

**Parkside Collegiate Institute**
- Saugeen District Secondary School
- St. Joan of Arc Secondary School
- Stayner Collegiate Institute

**Oregon**
- Clackamas Community College

**Pennsylvania**
- Cumberland Perry AVTS
- Franklin County Career & Technology Center
- Penn College of Technology
- Pleasant Valley Mennonite School
- Schaefferstown Mennonite High School
- Williamson College of the Trades

**South Carolina**
- Piedmont Technical College

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Mythbusting!

The hardscape industry includes installers, small and large contracting companies, scientists, engineers, managers and executives, manufacturers, architects and design professionals. All of these roles come together to provide services for homeowners, businesses, government entities and the environment. Let’s take a look at some of the myths surrounding the hardscape industry:

**Myth 1: You’ll never earn a good income as a hardscape professional.**

Hardscape professionals are well-compensated for their expertise and skills. Managers, executives, sales professionals, and others often earn over $100,000 per year. Commitment, drive, and dedication are rewarded in the hardscape industry!

**Myth 2: Hardscape jobs are all dirty and involve a lot of physical labor.**

There are many job roles within the hardscape industry. Some jobs involve physical work, but there’s a lot more that defines the industry and its professionals. Many entry-level workers without training start in the field, learning the foundation of hardscaping, but they are supported by specialized equipment and technology. Those who are promoted and those who enter the industry with training and skills may be involved in design, sales, administration, and management.

**Myth 3: There are no career advancement opportunities in the industry.**

There are tremendous opportunities for advancement in the hardscape industry. Those entering the field who have a strong work ethic and master their responsibilities often earn supervisory opportunities and continue to progress throughout their career. This industry rewards those who demonstrate the right aptitudes and commitment.

**Myth 4: The industry is low tech.**

Technology plays a significant role in the work done in the hardscape industry. From mechanical installation machines to computer aided design (CAD), technology helps hardscape professionals do their jobs.

**Myth 5: A college degree is wasted in the hardscape industry.**

Hardscape firms are business that require talented, trained professionals with education in fields like business, chemistry, finance, and more. Most professionals believe their degree has helped advance their career.

**Myth 6: Working as a hardscape professional is not a job in which you can have pride.**

The work done by hardscape professionals helps create beauty and can help the environment too! Families can gather on a hardscaped yard to enjoy a barbecue, sit by the fire pit, or hang out at the pool. Hardscape walkways are a beautiful addition to a home. And permeable pavements help the environment by reducing surface runoff and filtering stormwater. Hardscape professionals create lasting beauty that makes a difference in their customers’ lives.