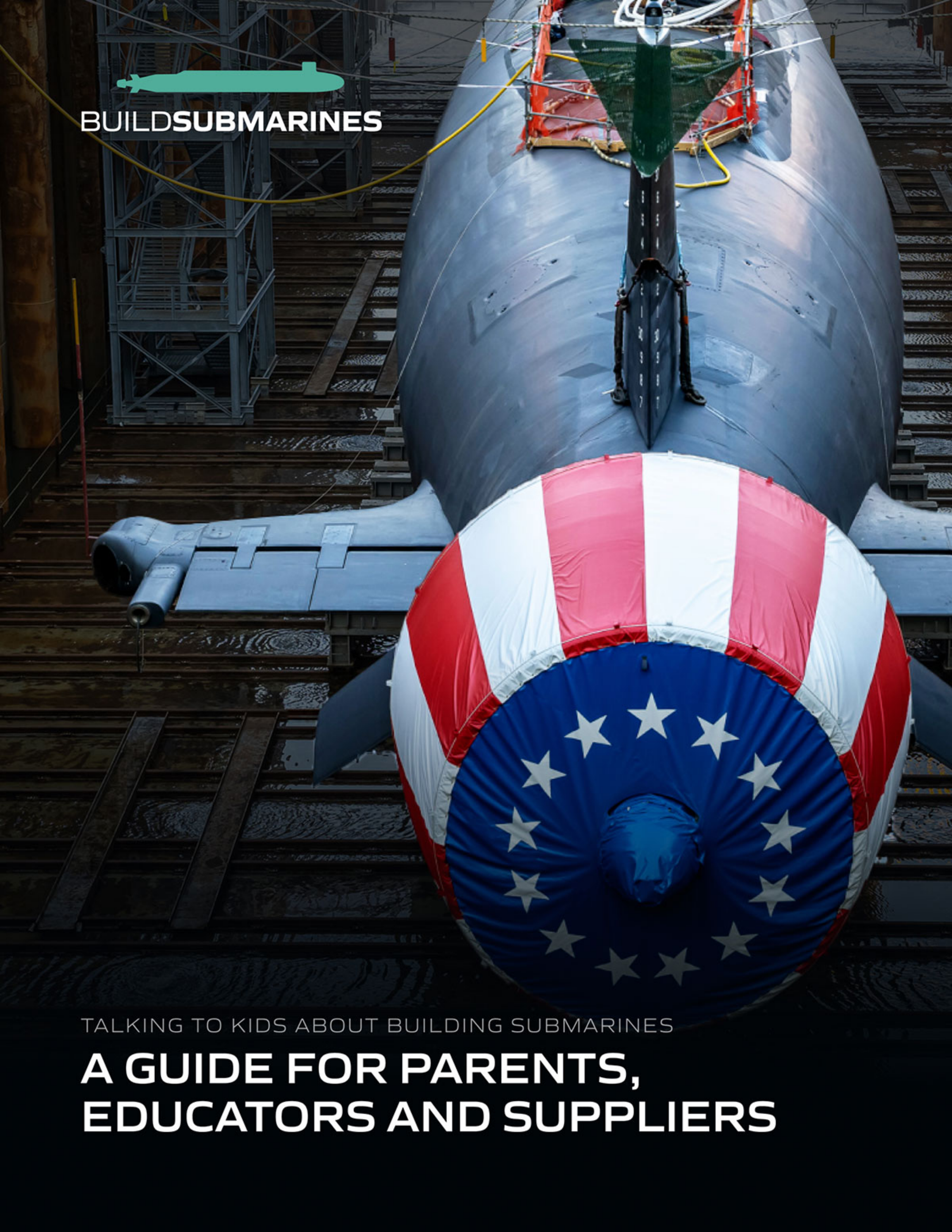
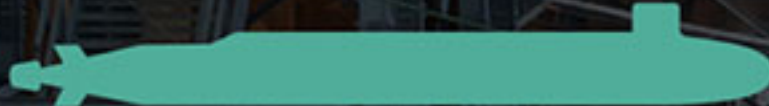
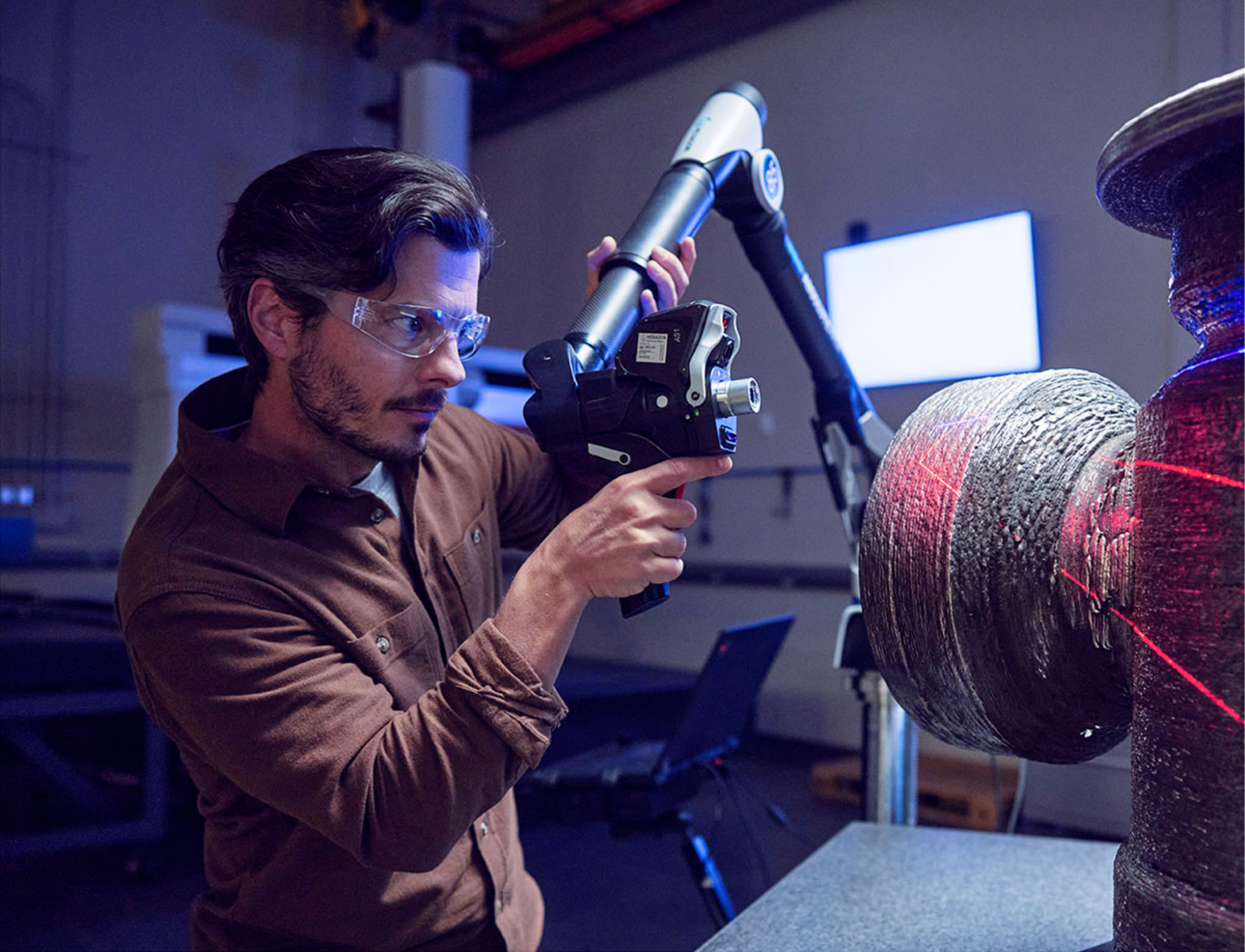





BUILDSUBMARINES

TALKING TO KIDS ABOUT BUILDING SUBMARINES

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS, EDUCATORS AND SUPPLIERS



WHO THIS GUIDE IS FOR

Submarine building is one of the largest skilled-workforce efforts in the country and most kids have never heard of it as something they could do. That's the gap this guide is meant to close, one conversation at a time.

THIS IS A HELPFUL GUIDE FOR:

- **Educators** bringing career exploration, STEM, or skilled trades into the classroom.
- **Parents and caregivers** looking for a real answer the next time a kid asks "what should I be when I grow up?"
- **Suppliers and industry partners** visiting schools, hosting tours, or working a table at a career day.

This isn't something to hand a kid to read. It's something for you to use — a short explanation you can say from memory, a standard set of talking points, age-by-age scripts, the questions you'll actually get asked, and a couple of things to do with the kid in front of you right now.

START WITH THIS

One paragraph, two versions. Learn this and you can handle almost any conversation that follows.

The short version — say this to another adult:

"Submarines are some of the most complex machines ever built, and they don't build themselves. It takes thousands of skilled people working together across the country to build one and BuildSubmarines.com is where people go to learn more about this work and connect to real career pathways tied to it. These are civilian jobs; nobody has to join the military to build a submarine."

The even shorter version — say this to a kid:

"Submarines don't build themselves. It takes thousands of people, with all kinds of skills, working all over the country, to build one. Somebody doing that work today started out exactly where you're sitting right now."

WHAT WE WANT YOUNG PEOPLE TO TAKE AWAY

You don't need to cover all of this in one conversation. If a kid walks away holding onto even a couple of these ideas, it worked.

- **Submarines are built by people.** Real people with real skills — not machines, not magic.
- **It takes every kind of talent.** Building, drawing, measuring, fixing, organizing, problem-solving. There's no single "type" of person who does this work.
- **The work happens everywhere.** Final assembly takes place at a shipyard, but the parts, materials, and systems that go into a submarine come from companies and workers all over the country — possibly closer to home than a kid would guess.
- **These are civilian careers.** This work supports the Navy's mission, but the people doing it are not in the military.
- **There's more than one way in.** Some people learn these skills through hands-on training. Others go through a four-year degree. Both are real paths into this work.
- **Care and precision matter — and that's a skill they're already practicing.** Every detail counts when you're building something this important, the same way it matters when they check their own work on a project or a puzzle.
- **The work matters.** It helps support the Navy and helps keep the country safe.



SAY IT THEIR WAY

ELEMENTARY (K-5)

What lands: scale, teamwork, big cool machines.

Try this: "A submarine is like a giant underwater puzzle. The pieces get made all over the country, and then a big team puts them together so every single piece fits just right."

Make it relatable: building with blocks, following instructions, working with a partner, trying again when something doesn't work the first time.

Skip: anything about weapons, combat, or how submarines are used. Keep the conversation on how they're built.

MIDDLE SCHOOL (6-8)

What lands: "Wait, that's a real job?" — specific tools, specific skills.

Try this: "Some people weld metal precisely enough to hold back the ocean. Some people measure parts down to a fraction of an inch. Those are real jobs — people train for them and get paid to do them."

Make it relatable: shop class, robotics club, anything hands-on they already like — building, fixing, taking things apart.

Skip: pushing toward a decision. This age is about discovery, not decisions.

HIGH SCHOOL (9-12)

What lands: pathways, and what it actually takes to get there.

Try this: "There's more than one way into this work. Some people start with training, some with a college degree — both are real, and there are open roles right now."

Make it relatable: CTE programs, apprenticeships, internships, and the question of what comes after graduation.

Skip: framing college as the only route in — or as the wrong one. Both are real here.

GENERAL LANGUAGE GUIDELINES FOR ALL AGES

The words you choose can help make submarine building feel exciting, understandable and welcoming for children. When talking with kids, use language that sparks curiosity and connects complex ideas to concepts they already know.

HELPFUL PHRASES:

“Submarine builders” · “Makers, builders, and problem-solvers” · “Civilian careers”

“Non-military roles” · “Skilled careers” · “Hands-on work” · “Teamwork”

“Safety” · “Precision” · “Important mission” · “Future career pathways”

“Learning real skills” · “Building something that matters” · “Built across the country”

“From small parts to final assembly” · “A nationwide team”

USE SELECTIVELY:

Some terms are appropriate but may need additional explanation depending on your audience.

Submarine industrial base

Appropriate when speaking with parents, educators and suppliers. For children, consider using simpler phrases like the people and companies that build submarines.

Manufacturing

A useful term, but pair it with more familiar words like building, making or hands-on work to make it easier for children to understand.

National security

Appropriate when speaking with adults. For children, a simpler phrase like helping keep the country safe is easier to understand.

Navy

It’s appropriate to explain that submarine builders support the U.S. Navy, but be careful not to imply that these civilian careers require military service.

AVOID OR USE WITH CAUTION:

- **Combat-focused language**
- **Weapons-heavy descriptions**
- **Classified or technical submarine capabilities**
- **Language that implies kids must join the military to work on submarines**
- **Overpromising specific pay, job placement, or career outcomes**
- **Making the work feel inaccessible, elite, or only for one type of person**
- **Making college sound like the only pathway**



HOW TO TALK ABOUT **SUBMARINE BUILDING**

WHEN TALKING WITH KIDS, CONVERSATIONS SHOULD FEEL:	AVOID CONVERSATIONS AND LANGUAGE THAT FEELS:
Curious	Overly military
Optimistic	Fear-based
Adventurous	Technical to the point of confusion
Smart but simple	Like a commercial
Fun and imaginative	Like a recruiting script
Respectful of the mission	Politicized
Grounded in real careers and real skills	Too adult or too serious for children

The best version of these conversations should feel like an adventure that just happens to teach kids something real.

USE INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

Help every child see that they could have a place in building submarines. The language you use can shape whether children feel these careers are meant for people like them. Choose inclusive words that welcome all children rather than language that unintentionally suggests these careers are only for one group.

INSTEAD OF SAYING:	TRY SAYING:
"The guys in engineering..."	"The engineering team..."
"We're looking for hardworking men."	"We're looking for skilled, hardworking people."
"He'll be a great fit..."	"They'll be a great fit."
"Every man on this crew..."	"Everyone on this crew..."
"Ask one of the guys to help you."	"Ask someone on the team to help you."
"Skilled craftsmen build submarines."	"Skilled tradespeople build submarines."

The goal is simple:

Help every child—regardless of gender—see themselves as someone who can build, design, solve problems, and contribute. Building submarines takes people with many different talents, interests, and perspectives.



MEET THE TEAM BEHIND BUILDING A SUBMARINE

Say these out loud, one at a time. Then ask: "Which one of those sounds most like you?"



WELDER

"This is the person who joins pieces of metal together so strongly they can hold back the ocean."



ELECTRICIAN

"This is the person who connects the wiring and power for everything on board."



MACHINIST

"This is the person who shapes metal parts so precisely that everything fits together perfectly."



PIPEFITTER

"This is the person who builds the systems that move air, water, and other important materials through the sub."



ENGINEER

"This is the person who solves the hardest problems and figures out how everything works together."



DESIGNER

"This is the person who turns an idea into a drawing or model that builders can actually follow."



INSPECTOR

"This is the person who checks every step of the work to make sure it's safe and done right."



PLANNER

"This is the person who organizes the order of the work, so the whole team knows what happens next."



SUPPLIER

"This is the person, or company, that makes or provides the parts and materials that eventually become part of a submarine."



QUESTIONS YOU'LL GET

"Do you have to join the Navy to do this?"

No. These are civilian jobs — at shipyards, manufacturers, companies, and engineering firms across the country. The work supports the Navy's mission, but the people doing it are not in the military.

"Do you need to go to college?"

Not for every path. Some roles start with hands-on training. Others — engineering and design, for example — usually involve a college degree. Both are real ways into this work.

"Is there anything like that near us?"

Possibly, even if you're not near a shipyard. Final assembly happens in a handful of places, but the parts, materials, and systems come from suppliers and workers across the country.

"Is it dangerous?"

Safety is built into how this work gets done — checking your work, following steps, looking out for your teammates. It's one of the first things people are trained on, and it's treated as a strength, not a warning sign.

"Is this just for people who are good at math?"

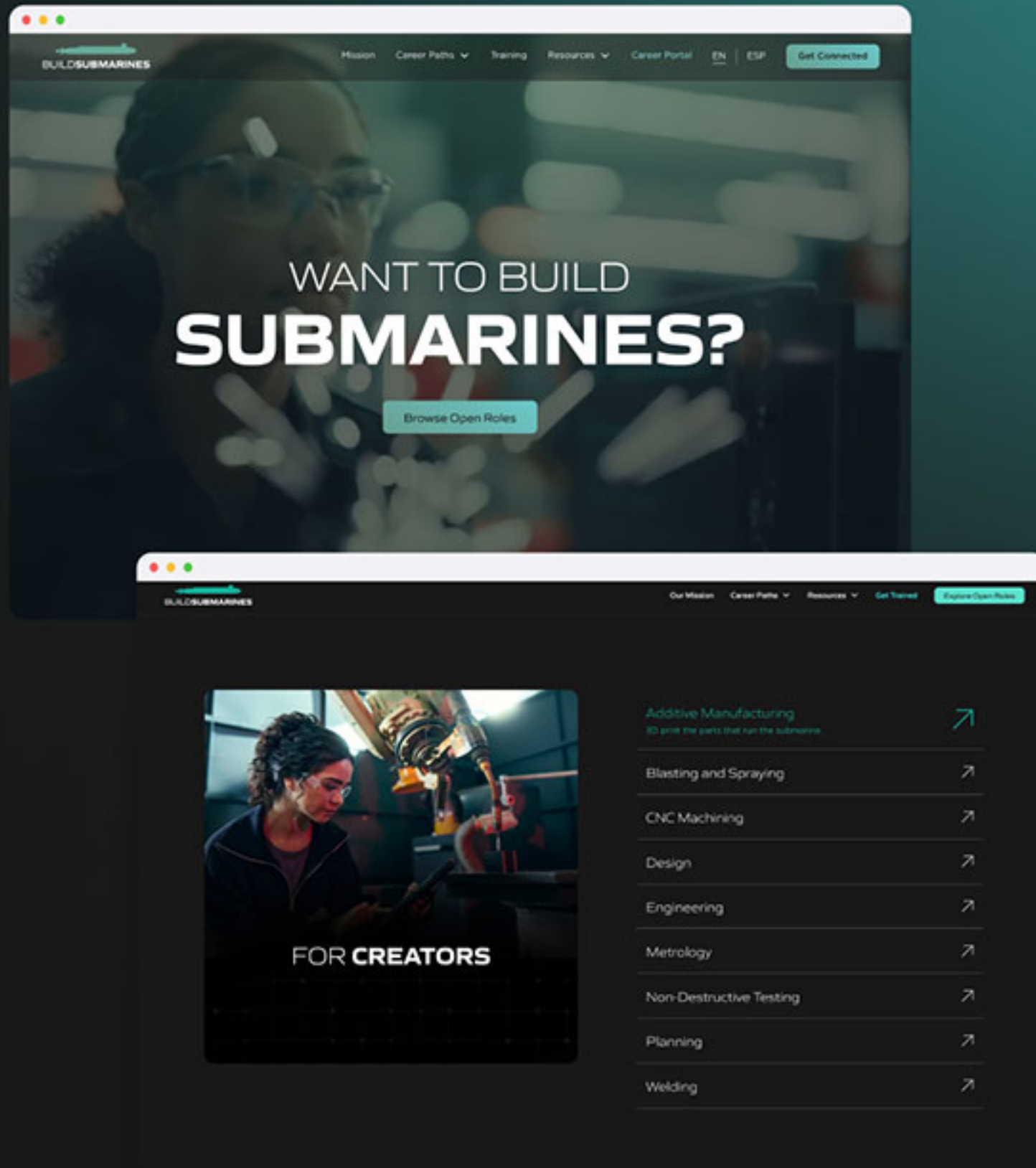
No. This work needs people who are good with their hands, people who notice details others miss, people who keep a team organized, and people patient enough to get something exactly right. Technical skill is something people learn — it's not a requirement to walk in the door.

"Is this just for boys?"

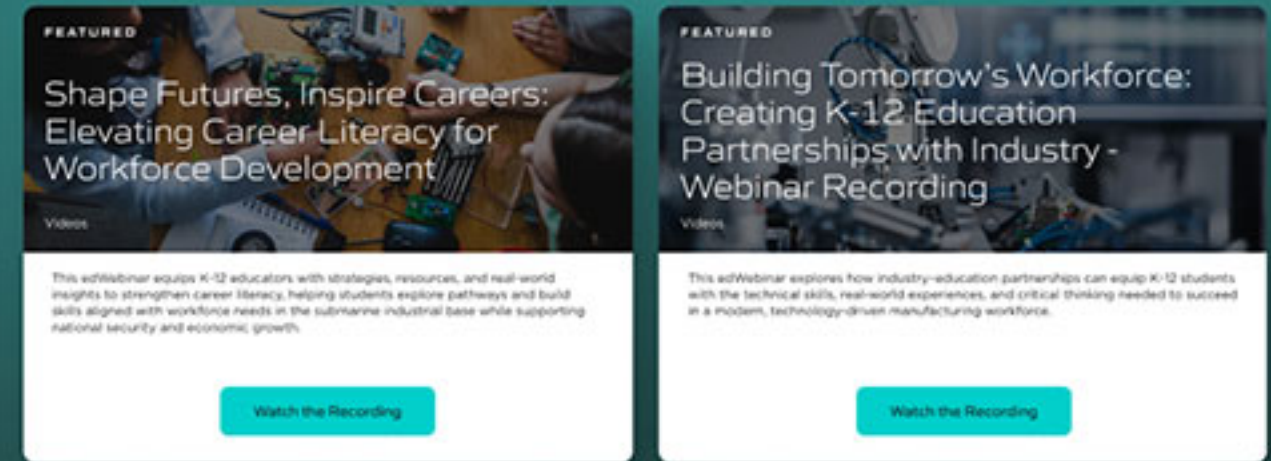
No. This work includes people of every gender, and the field is actively growing to include more. Worth saying out loud — kids pick up quickly on who a career "sounds like it's for."

"How young can someone start thinking about this?"

Any age. Actual training and jobs usually start after high school, but curiosity can start now — that's what this conversation is for.



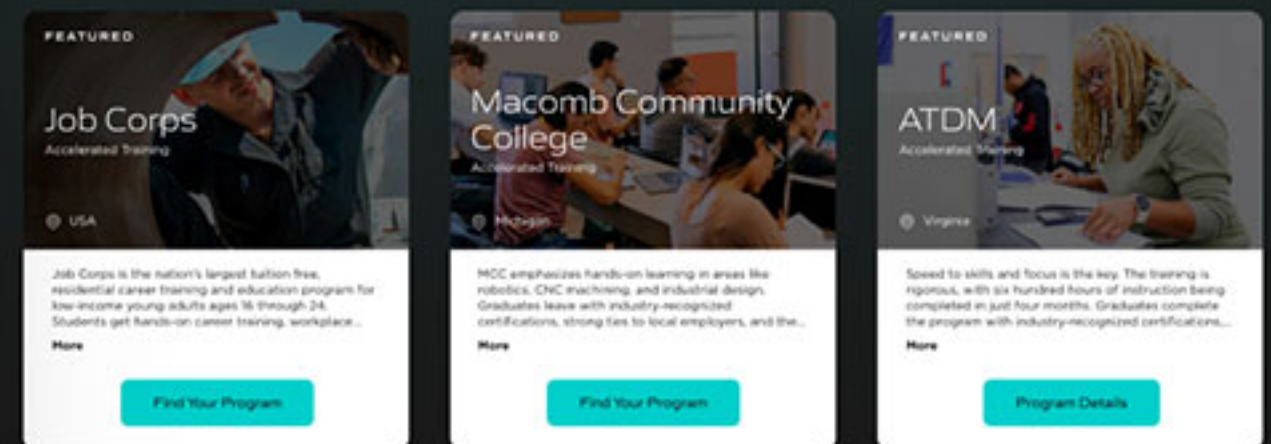
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES



REAL STORIES



TRAINING PROGRAMS



WHAT'S ON BUILDSUBMARINES.COM

BuildSubmarines.com is a career portal, with information about real careers, training pathways, and open roles connected to building submarines. But with younger kids, the goal isn't to send them straight to a job search. Use the site to keep their curiosity going and help them explore the people, skills, and possibilities behind the work.

YOU'LL FIND:

- **Simple-language career explanations** — what someone in each role actually does, day to day.
- **Stories from people doing this work now, in their own words.**
- **Resources for educators, including materials built for the classroom at BuildSubmarines.com/education**
- **Training and pathway information for people exploring options after high school.**

You don't need to walk a kid through the whole site. **"A place to keep exploring if you're curious"** is enough.



BUILDSUBMARINES



To learn more about careers in skilled trades,
scan the code or visit **BuildSubmarines.com**