

PACK IT LIGHT



Wear It Right

It's common for kids to lug around backpacks appearing to be twice their body weight. Though it may seem cool to sling a heavy load over one shoulder – long-term head, neck and shoulder pain is not. Here are some helpful tips that will help your child carry his or her backpack with ease.

Backpacks & Your Child's Health

Carrying a heavy load can lead to poor posture and a distorted spinal column. Over time, this can cause muscle strain, headaches, back, neck and arm pain, and even nerve damage.

A heavy backpack carried on one shoulder forces the muscles and spine to compensate for the uneven weight. This places stress on the mid and lower back.

Backpacks & Your Child's Health



Select a lightweight backpack in vinyl or canvas.

Pick a backpack with two wide, adjustable and padded shoulder straps, along with a hip or waist strap, and padded back.

Try the backpack for fit and comfort – ensure it's not too snug around the shoulders and armpits, and that it's proportionate to the wearer's body type.

Packing it properly

- Your child's backpack should only contain what is needed for that day.
- A full backpack should be no more than 10 to 15 per cent of the wearer's body weight.
- Place the heaviest objects close to the body and light or odd-shaped objects away from the back.

Putting the backpack on



Place the backpack on a flat surface and slip on the backpack one shoulder at a time, adjust the straps to fit comfortably.

When lifting the backpack use both arms and legs, and bend at the knees – give young children a hand.

Wearing a backpack



Backpacks should never be worn over only one shoulder – this can result in neck, shoulder and back pain.

Both shoulder straps should be used and adjusted so the backpack sits flush against the back.

Test the fit of the backpack by sliding your hand between the backpack and your child's back – if you can't slide your hand in, the backpack is too snug.