

September (9.2)

A pain in the backpack.

- As your kids prepare for their march back to school, take a second to consider the following:
 - One recent study identified that over half of children carried loads heavier than recommended (>15% of body weight; American Physical Therapy Association).
 - The same study found that 1/3 of these children reported significant back pain requiring treatment or time away from activities or school.

If you see any of the following, your child's backpack may be too heavy:

- Their posture changes when wearing the backpack
- They struggle when putting on or taking off the backpack
- They report pain, tingling or numbness when wearing the backpack;
- The pack is more than 15% of their body weight (recommended maximum).

Before they head out the door, do the following five-point check:

1. **Are they wearing both straps?**
2. **Does the backpack rest over the middle of the back?** (not slouching below their hips)
3. **Can the child put on and take off the backpack without difficulty?**
4. Is there anything in the bag they don't need to be carrying?
5. Are the heaviest items toward the bottom of the pack and closest to their low back?



Shortcut Tip