



## BACKPACK SAFETY

It's that time of year again! The beginning of school is just around the corner, and that means buying school supplies and a new backpack to hold it all which can be quite a load on our kids' backs. Do you know how much weight your child should be carrying? There are several things we need to be looking for when choosing the right bag for each student.

- Measure the backpack. A backpack for school or college shouldn't extend 4 inches (10cm) below you or your child's waistline.
- Pack only what you can carry rather than what can fit into the bag.
- Pack the heaviest items at the bottom of the pack and the lightest items up the top.
- Organize your subject material regularly, to avoid carrying what isn't needed that day or week.
- Go as electronic as your school or college will let you.
- Try storing items in your locker.
- Look for a bag that is padded or ergonomic straps that are adjustable, padded back piece to protect the back from whatever is packed inside the bag and a contour that fits comfortably on your child's back. In addition, a chest or sternum strap that clips across the front will help to steady the whole load.
- Use both shoulder straps; they should be snug but not tight. Straps should be Adjustable, 1 1/2" wide and padded. Fits well resting on the lower back. Lugging the backpack around by one strap can cause a disproportionate shift of weight to one side, leading to neck and muscle spasms, as well as low-back pain.
- A backpack with individualized compartments helps position the contents most effectively. Make sure that pointy or bulky objects are packed away from the area that will rest on your child's back, and try to place the heaviest items closest to the body.

### MAXIMUM PACK WEIGHT CHART

Weight of child (lbs)	Weight of backpack
60	5
60-75	10
75-100	15
100-125	18
125-150	20
150-200	25

### THINGS TO LOOK FOR

**Wide Straps**

**Padded Back**  
(reduces pressure)

**Reflective Material**

**Light Load**  
(no more than 15-20% of body weight)

**Multiple Compartments**  
(distributes weight)

**Hip and Chest Belts**  
(transfers weight from back to hips and chest)

