

find

<< back >>

Subscribe to the free KidsGrowth weekly email newsletter by entering your email address below.

subscribe

parenting resources

- ▶ Parenting and Behavioral
- ▶ Child Development
- ▶ Childhood Conditions
- ▶ Growth Milestones
- ▶ Growth Charts
- ▶ Advice Center

featured parenting tips

- ▶ Babies
- ▶ Toddlers
- ▶ Teens
- ▶ Behavior
- ▶ Sports
- ▶ Immunizations
- ▶ Safety

interact

- ▶ Interactive Quizzes
- ▶ See Saw

reviews

- ▶ Book Reviews

poison control

product recalls

Advertisements:

Advertising links will direct you off of the KidsGrowth Web site. KidsGrowth is neither responsible for nor does it necessarily endorse the privacy practices, content or products of these sites.

AdChoices

- ▶ [Child Weight](#)
- ▶ [Shoulders](#)
- ▶ [Weight Help](#)

poll

Weight of the World on Their Shoulders

Most industries, including postal employees and airline baggage handlers, set limits on how much their workers can lift and carry. However, the largest group subjected to carrying large loads on a daily basis without proper supervision are school children. According to Lori Rubenstein, PT, M.App., Sc. Instructor of Clinical Physical Therapy at University of Southern California, children should carry no more than 10 percent of their body weight in their backpacks. In her research, conducted at the University of South Australia, Adelaide, Australia, Ms. Rubenstein discovered that youngsters were carrying up to 30 percent of their body weight. "Even pack animals are not allowed to carry more than 25 percent of their body weight," said Ms. Rubenstein.

Shoulder and low back pain, muscle and neck spasms, and tingling and numbness in the hands and fingers are symptoms youngsters experience when their backpacks are over loaded. Children usually stack books and other heavy items at the bottom of the packs, placing lunches and more fragile items on top. The youngster then slings the whole thing over one shoulder by a thin strap and leaves for school. These heavy and uneven loads distort posture, causing muscle strain and fatigue.

Here are some suggestions to help protect your child's musculoskeletal health when using a backpack:

1. Wear the backpack on both shoulders. Children's spines are skeletally immature and do not have the strength to balance a heavy weight carried on one side of their body. Make sure they use both shoulder straps and the weight is equally distributed across their back.
2. Adjust the shoulder straps to allow the top of the backpack to be at shoulder height and the lowest point no lower than the hollow of the lower back. Straps should be wide and heavily padded.

Should schools "profile" all students to identify those who may become violent?

Yes: No:



Quick reference medical handouts used by Pediatric offices



3. The bag should not be wider than the width of the chest.

4. Pack items evenly with the heaviest items closest to the spine. This allows the youngster's legs to support the additional weight.

5. A waist belt will help keep the bag close to the spine and a hip belt helps to distribute the load more evenly to the hips.

6. The surface of the bag should be padded and be in contact with the child's spine.

7. Students should not use their backpacks as their lockers. Encourage schools to provide lockers and enough time for the children to go to and from their lockers between classes. This helps to avoid the unnecessary transporting of heavy books. One school, in La Puente, Calif., offers luggage carts for their students to transport their book bags between classes.

8. Teachers can help by informing their pupils about which books they will need for the following day and which books they can leave at home.

High school students may not carry the weight of the world on their shoulders, but sometimes it seems that way. A study done by a group of Florida high school journalism students confirmed Lori Rubenstein's research. They weighed all the book bags brought to school for one week. The average backpack weighed 19.8 pounds and the heaviest - containing nothing but textbooks and a notebook - weighed 30.9 pounds! And the youngster carrying that backpack could not have weighed more than 95 pounds herself.

Experts agree that a loaded backpack should not exceed 10 percent of a child's body weight. That means a 100-pound child should carry no more than 10 pounds of books on their back. Before your youngster leaves for school today, weigh their backpack. The numbers on the scale may surprise you!

[<< back >>](#)

As a reminder, this information should not be relied on as medical advice and is not intended to replace the advice of your child's pediatrician. Please read our full [disclaimer](#).

Advertisements:

Advertising links will direct you off of the KidsGrowth Web site. KidsGrowth is neither responsible for nor does it necessarily endorse the privacy practices, content or products of these sites.

Pottery Barn Kids®



www.potterybarnkids.com

Free Shipping on Kids' Backpacks & More Gear at Pottery Barn Kids®.

| [home](#) | [contact us](#) | [about us](#) |

| [parenting & behavioral](#) | [child development](#) | [growth milestones](#) |

| [childhood conditions](#) | [seesaw](#) | [book reviews](#) | [Advertise on KidsGrowth](#)

Copyright © 1999-2014 KG Investments, LLC.

[Usage Policy](#) and [Disclaimer](#) and [Privacy Policy](#)

[Web Design by Gecko Media](#)