



BACKPACK TIPS

Kids Use backpacks every day!

To avoid problems with back pain, shoulder pain, scoliosis, headaches and general poor posture, follow these guidelines.

Safe Backpack Use:

- Use both straps -- one over each shoulder
- Distribute weight evenly within the backpack
- Remove and put on backpacks carefully, avoid twisting
- Wear the backpack over the mid back (refer to diagram)
- Lighten the load as much as possible
- Backpack should be no more than 15 % percent of the child's body weight, as recommended by experts

Backpacks Should Have:

- Padded back
- Multiple compartments
- Hip and chest belts
- Reflective material

Signs of improper backpack use:

- Change in posture when wearing the backpack; such as leaning forward or forward shoulders
- Struggling to get backpack on or off
- Child complains of pain when wearing the backpack
- Child complaining of tingling and or numbness in arms and legs
- Red marks on shoulders upon backpack removal

Loading a Backpack:

- Load the heaviest items in the section of the pack closest to the child's back
- Carry only the necessary items
- Arrange materials so they do not slide around. Backpacks with separate compartments are great as they allow for better placement of materials.

Backpack Maximum Weight Chart (for Children):

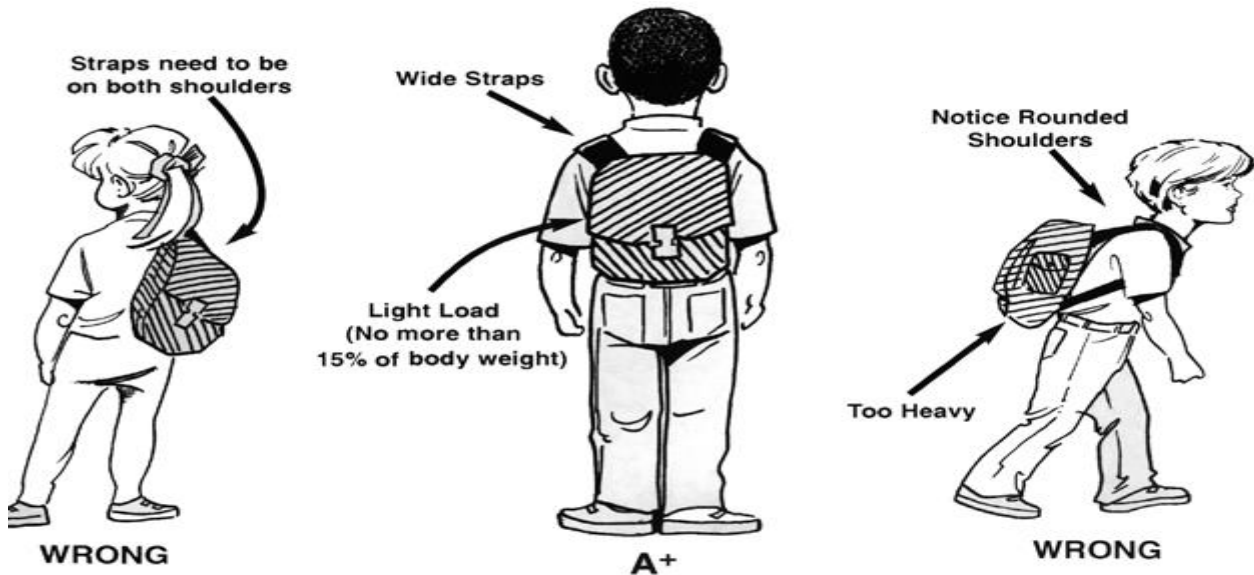
According to the American Physical Therapy Association,
American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons and the
American Chiropractic Association

Weight of Child (in pounds)	Maximum Backpack Weight
60	5
60-75	10
75-100	15
100-125	18
125-150	20
150-200	25

Determining maximal backpack weight: Child's weight x .15 = max
No one should carry more than 25 lbs. in a backpack.



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Sources:

- www.aota.org?Practitioners/Awareness/School-Backpack-Awareness (American Occupational Therapy Association - AOTA)
- <http://www.aota.org/en/Conference-Events/Backpack-Safety-Awareness-Day.aspx> (American Occupational Therapy Association - AOTA)
- www.apta.org (American Physical Therapy Association)
- <http://ergonomics.about.com/od/ergonomicsforchildren/ss>

Video:

- www.moveforwardpt.com
Scroll down to main page, go to videos and click on "backpack safety for kids"

