

# Fabulinus: en-route to knowledge...



Your child's well-being and safety are extremely important to us and we at Gyan Devi Salwan Montessori School make sure that we've taken every step possible to ensure that he/she's safe and secure.

Backpacks are a practical way for children to carry schoolbooks and supplies. When used correctly, backpacks can be a good way to carry the necessities of the school day. They are designed to distribute the weight of the load among some of the body's strongest muscles. However, backpacks that are too heavy or are worn incorrectly can cause problems for children.

Through this newsletter, we would like to share a few guidelines to help your children use backpacks safely.



## *Learning without burden*

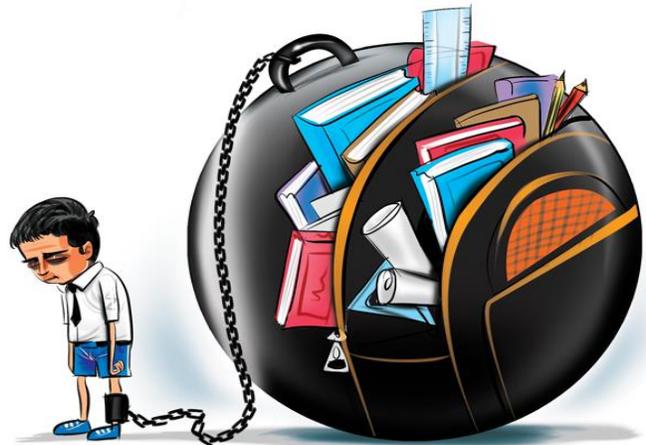
Is your child a happy child?

Is he keen on going to school?

Does he feel very lethargic or tired after coming back from school?

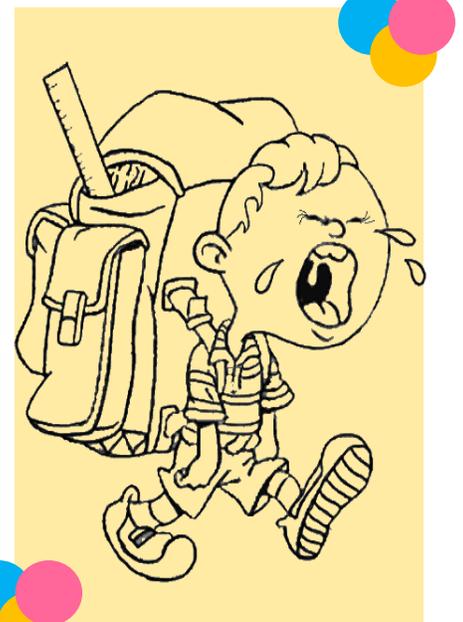
***BEWARE!!!!!!***

***This might be a signal.***



## *Those packs might just be too heavy....*

- If kids grunt when putting on or taking off the backpack
- Red marks on shoulders from the straps
- Complain that shoulders, arms or fingers are "falling asleep" i.e., feeling numb
- Back, neck and shoulder pain along with tingling, numbness and weakness in the hands
- Fatigue and an early development of poor posture
- Strain on the neck and shoulder leading to headaches
- Damage to the spine
- Reduced breathing capacity due to pressure on the lungs resulting from a forward or sideways bent pos
- Back pains and muscle spasms



# What Heavy Backpacks Are Doing To Kids' Bodies

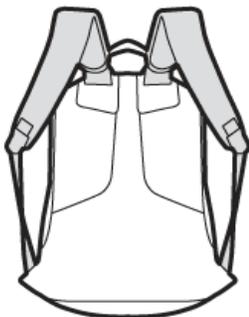
About 5,000 children visit emergency rooms each year because of backpack-related injuries, and at least 14,000 kids are treated for them. While not every kid will go to the hospital because of heavy backpacks, overweight loads can cause neck, back and shoulder pain and more. Below, see what is so dangerous about kids carrying heavy backpacks — and what parents can do about it.



Forward Head Posture  
Proper Posture

## Shoulders

Shoulders aren't made to hang things on. When a heavy load is put on kids' shoulders, joints get tight, muscles tighten down, it alters bio-mechanics, and creates potential strain.



## Extra Support

**Use both shoulders.** The backpack should always be worn on two shoulders so that there isn't too much stress on one side of the spine.

**Waist strap.** Kids should always use the waist strap (preferably a thick one) to help distribute the weight.

## Neck and Upper Back

Heavy backpacks create a forward trunk lean (rounding of upper back) which causes a forward head posture with extended neck, creating neck and shoulder pain and making it difficult for muscles and ligaments to hold the body up.

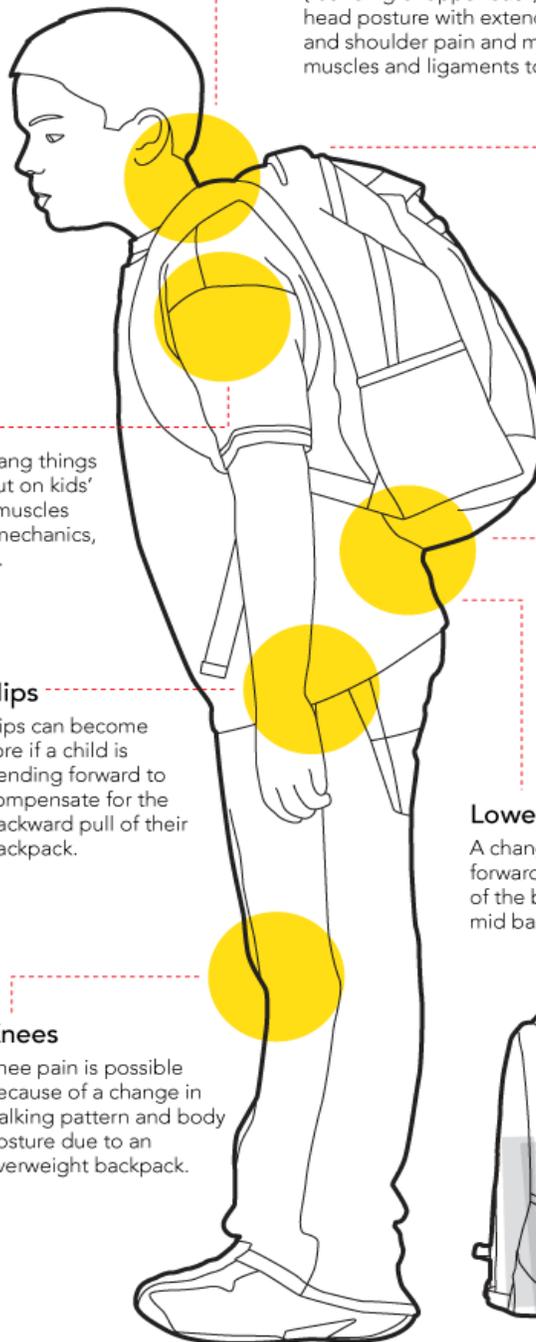
## Fit and Sizing

**Material.** Choose backpacks made for kids, which are made of more lightweight fabric than backpacks for adults.

## Close to the body.

The backpack should be close to the body with minimal space between the back and the pack itself.

**Length.** It should be the length of the torso and the bottom should be two inches below the waist.



## Hips

Hips can become sore if a child is bending forward to compensate for the backward pull of their backpack.

## Knees

Knee pain is possible because of a change in walking pattern and body posture due to an overweight backpack.

## Lower Back

A change in posture by leaning forward to compensate for the weight of the backpack can result in lower and mid back pain and muscle tightness.

## Weight

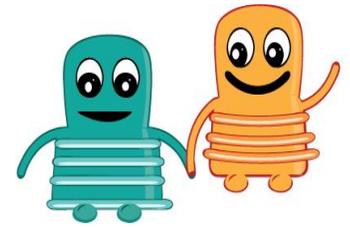
**Distribution.** Use backpacks with multiple compartments to help distribute the weight of contents. Pack the heavier things low and towards the back, closer to the body.

**Ratio.** Backpacks should be 10-15 percent of a kid's weight.



## Don't Fret, Injury Is Preventable!!!

- A backpack is usually more comfortable than a bag that puts strain on only one shoulder, but even a backpack shouldn't be overloaded.
- When buying a bag, buy a sturdy, well-designed bag with wide, padded shoulder straps that reduces pressure on the neck and shoulder area.
- Buy a bag with adjustable straps which can be altered as the child grows.
- Check your child's posture after he has put the bag on.
- If you notice your child leaning forward or slouching, check if the bag is too heavy or if it has been packed incorrectly.
- Make sure your child is only carrying the items they need for school that day – remove any unnecessary books and equipment.
- Load should not be more than 10-15% of body weight.



### Backpacks: Beasts of burden

- Heavy backpacks can distort the natural curvature of the spine resulting in muscle strain and poor posture.
- Overweight packs can cause lower back, neck and shoulder pain; as well as tingling and numbness in the arms.
- Girls are more likely to have pain associated with carrying a backpack because of their smaller frames.

## On The Go....

WEIGHTY ISSUES	
THE PROPOSED CHILDREN SCHOOL BAGS (LIMITATION ON WEIGHT) BILL 2006	
Govt. should notify in gazette average weight of child for each class to determine bag's weight	Weight of school bag should not be more than <b>10 p.c.</b> of child's body weight
Guidelines issued by schools should prescribe bag's dimension, fabric for each class	Students should not be allowed to sling bag over one shoulder
Govt. should ensure lockers to store sports equipment, books	Any school violating provisions liable to pay penalty
Schools should ensure students use both straps of school bags	
ADVERSE EFFECTS OF CARRYING HEAVY BAGS	
Permanent stoop	Excessive weight can affect spine, leading to offensive skeletal and muscle maturity
Children carrying excess weight may develop poor lung functioning	
BENDING FORWARD WHILE CARRYING HEAVY BAGS MAKES BREATHING DIFFICULT	
In government schools, school bags weigh a maximum of 3 kg for high school students, and 2 kg for primary classes. We are thinking of formulating guidelines. — <b>MOHAMMAD MOHSIN</b> , COMMISSIONER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION	

Medical experts recommend a bag not weighing more than 10 p.c. of the child's weight. But, it is more than two and a half times that. —**P.P. SABURAJ**, CHILD RIGHTS ACTIVIST

Though parents want to send only a few books in the bag, school managements insist on bringing about two dozen books. —**MULLAHALLI SURT**, PRESIDENT, THE PARENTS ASSOCIATION

While the teacher is responsible for ensuring burden of books is less, parents need to take responsibility of sending books in an organised manner. —**D. SHASHI KUMAR**, ORGANISING SECRETARY OF THE KARNATAKA STATE PRIVATE SCHOOLS MANagements' FEDERATION

## How heavy is your child's bag???

