

Big Backpack Energy

It's not just about the size... it's about the **ergonomics!**

A backpack isn't just a school supply. It carries homework, lunch, laptops, and a lot of daily life. That's why the right fit (and the right style!) matters. A well-chosen, well-packed backpack supports growing bodies, reduces daily strain, and helps your child move through their day prepared and with confidence.

Check out these tips from the Canadian Chiropractic Association (CCA) to find the right backpack and build healthy habits that last year round. Let's bring the energy — not the aches!



PROPER FIT

The backpack should not be wider than your child's torso or hang below their waistline



MULTIPLE COMPARTMENTS

Helps distribute weight evenly



LIGHTWEIGHT MATERIAL

The bag itself should be light and durable



PADDED SHOULDER STRAPS

Wide, adjustable, and cushioned for comfort



WAIST & CHEST STRAPS

Adds support and balance



BACK PADDING

Adds comfort and protects the spine

POP QUIZ!



Here's a quick test to try at home:

Have your child try on their backpack, then lift one leg. If they lose balance, their pack is too heavy!

Canadian Chiropractic Association

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Studies show that up to 40% of kids report back pain, often linked to heavy backpacks. Many carry more than 15% of their body weight — sometimes up to 30%, which can lead to poor posture, muscle fatigue and tension, and changes in how they move. Over time, this strain can affect balance, comfort, and energy throughout the day. Choosing the right backpack and packing it properly makes a real difference.

Backpack Basics for an **A+** Start

- ✓ **Pack heaviest items close to the back**
Keeps the weight close to your child's center of gravity, reducing strain and helping with balance.
- ✓ **Use both shoulder straps**
Wearing both straps distributes weight evenly and prevents one-sided strain on muscles and joints.
- ✓ **Tighten the straps for a snug fit**
Adjust the straps so the backpack sits snugly against the back. This helps prevent the bag from shifting and reduces strain.
- ✓ **Make sure the backpack sits no lower than 5-8 cm below the waist**
A lower-hanging pack pulls backward and puts stress on growing spines and muscles.



If you want an expert opinion on finding the right backpack for your child, you can always discuss with your local chiropractor or manual therapist, this is especially important if your child is experiencing back pain.

The suggestions provided in this document are for educational purposes only. No information from this document is intended as a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Consultation with a chiropractor or another health care provider is recommended for anyone experiencing muscle, joint and/or nervous system complaints. While the information provided is up to date, the CCA recognizes that research and data are ever emerging and changing. Please use this information in conjunction with the best available evidence. Publication date: July 2025.

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Hell, AK. *The influence of backpack weight in school children: gait, muscle activity, posture and stability.* Orthopade. 2020;50(6):446-454.

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