

The Backpack Dilemma

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Available Options

Your first option, as a concerned parent, is to make sure that your child's backpack is functional more than aesthetic. Every child has a desire to have the coolest backpack, but if it's not functional then it's damaging to the spine. Find a backpack that fits properly (not too long or too short) and make sure that it has wide, padded, adjustable straps (for proper positioning on the back). A second option is to look for a backpack with a hip strap or lumbar pillow.

The hip strap, when used, can distribute a portion of the weight to the hips easing the load on the spine and shoulders. On the other hand, the lumbar pillow helps the back support the greater portion of the weight with the least amount of damage. Remember, just because the backpack is sturdier does not mean it can carry more. A backpack should never weigh more than 15% of the child carrying it.

The Roller Bag

Despite the hype this is not the answer to a parent's dream. Yes, the roller bag takes the weight off the child's spine and shoulders; however, an empty roller bag weighs up to 80% more than an empty backpack. Yes, the roller bag uses wheels and levers and thus requires less energy to transport. However, if you ever wheel a child more to the store, it is to even load a parent, in part, your child's backpack and up weigh

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References:

1. The American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons. Bulletin Volume 47, No 6. December 1999
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