

How to Pick the Right School Bag for your Child



Why is it important to choose a good school bag? What kind of problems can bags cause for children's posture and health?

The importance of picking a good school bag cannot be overlooked. While our children are busy learning, playing, eating, drinking and sleeping..... they are also busy growing. This is a critical time in their lives in terms of physical development. Looking after our spines, particularly those of our young people has never been so important. After all this is our powerhouse to which everything else is connected.

It is our jobs as parents, guardians or care-givers to keep an eye on this growth and also our children's postures. The stresses and strains that our children or young persons are experiencing now will shape the way they develop going forwards.

What should parents take into consideration when buying a school bag? What should they be careful to avoid?

In terms of school bags here are the key things to be taken into consideration:

1. The size of the bag - ideally your child's school bag should sit from the level shoulder blades to just below the waist. The bag should not hang below the level of the buttocks as this will encourage your child to overarch their lower back or lean forwards in order to balance themselves.
2. A school bag should have two adjustable straps that sit over each shoulder evenly; avoid any one shoulder bags as this will tend to increase the weight taken through this side. Your child will then tend to shift their bodyweight away from that side in order to compensate leading to risk of muscle injury.
3. A bag with thick, wide padded straps and a padded back-piece is important to ensure even weight distribution with added comfort and protection for your child. Avoid bags with thin straps as they will only dig into your child's shoulders once they are carrying any weight in them.

Are there any particular brands or bags you would recommend? If so, what do you like about them, and what makes them stand out compared to others?

There are lots of fantastic brands on the market which cater for every budget. The key thing to remember when picking your child's schoolbag is that they are well structured, have two thick padded, adjustable shoulder straps and a protective back piece. Some ones of note include:

- Premier Stationary
- Jansport
- Ridge - 53
- Aldi own brand - Lily and Dan School Backpacks

How should school bags be packed and carried? Is there anything parents should bear in mind if children cycle to school, for example?

When packing your child's school bag, always remember to pack the heaviest items into the bag first so that they are closest to your child's spine and centre of gravity. Any bulky or pointy objects should be placed towards the front so that they are not sticking into your child's body, causing them discomfort.

I cannot stress enough how important it is to make sure your child is carrying their bag over both shoulders....I know it may not be the most fashionable but I promise they will thank you in the long run!!

