



The American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc.

# 1, 2, 3's of Basic Backpack Wearing

---



# 1 Pack It



Utilize **different compartments** and pockets to distribute weight

- Heavier items closer to the back center of the backpack
- Lighter items in the front of the backpack
- Sharp items away from the back



lightest



mid-weight



heaviest

Lighten the load so it is no more than 10% of your child's weight; heavy backpacks can cause falls and spinal damage

10%

# 2 Put It On

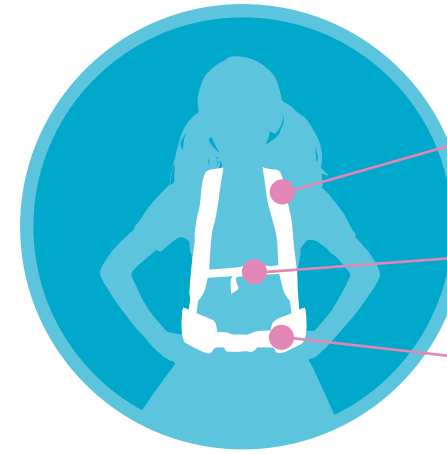


Teach your child to pick up the backpack by **bending and lifting in the knees** instead of the waist to prevent back injury

"The selection of a backpack is a family affair. By joining together as a team children will realize the importance of proper backpack wearing. It should be considered a fun family activity. The bottom line message is to have children begin to take more responsibility for their physical health."

-Dr. Karen Jacobs, Occupational Therapist & Ergonomist

# 3 Adjust & Carry



Always **use both shoulder straps** to prevent injury

Adjust the **sternum strap**

Secure the **hip belt**

The backpack should **rest snugly** against the back



Watch for **warning signs** that the backpack is too heavy, including:

- **Difficulty** when putting on or taking off the backpack
- **Pain** when wearing the backpack
- **Tingling** or numbness in the arms or legs
- Red **strap marks** over the anterior part of the shoulders
- Any change in side to side **posture** while wearing the backpack

shoulders

hips

Adjust the shoulder and waist straps so that the pack fits comfortably.

To ensure a proper fit, make sure the backpack does not extend past your child's shoulders, or below the top of the hipbones.

# Happy Back to School!

from



**The American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc.**

The American Occupational Therapy Association advances the quality, availability, use, and support of occupational therapy through standard-setting, advocacy, education, and research on behalf of its members and the public.

Occupational therapy is a science-driven, evidence-based profession that enables people of all ages to live life to its fullest by helping them promote health and prevent—or live better with—illness, injury, or disability.

**DISCLAIMER:**

The American Occupational Therapy Association does not endorse any products.

To learn more, please visit [www.aota.org/backpack](http://www.aota.org/backpack)