

# WATCH THOSE BACKPACKS !

*Did you know? ...*

- *the majority of school age children carry backpack loads that are too heavy for their developing bodies*
- *Overweight backpacks have been contributing to spinal problems in children?*
- *Spinal health is essential to proper growth and development*
- *Good spinal health makes it possible for all the organs in the body to function efficiently*

**The American Chiropractic Association recommends the following for your child:**

**Make sure your child's backpack weighs no more than 5 to 10 percent of his or her body weight. A heavier backpack will cause your child to bend forward in an attempt to support the weight on his or her back, rather than on the shoulders, using the straps.**

**The backpack should never hang more than four inches below the waistline. A backpack that hangs too low increases the weight on the shoulders, causing your child to lean forward when walking.**

**A backpack with individualized compartments helps in positioning the contents most effectively. Make sure that pointy or bulky objects are packed away from the area that will rest on your child's back.**

**Bigger is not necessarily better. The more room there is in a backpack, the more your child will carry – and the heavier the backpack will be.**

**Urge your child to wear both shoulder straps. Lugging the backpack around by one strap can cause the disproportionate shift of weight to one side, leading to neck pain and muscle spasms as well as low back pain.**

**Wide padded straps are very important. Non-padded straps are uncomfortable and can dig into your child's shoulders.**

**The shoulder straps should be adjustable so the backpack can be fitted to your child's body. Straps that are too loose can cause the backpack to dangle uncomfortably and cause spinal problems.**

**Observe your child's posture. If the child leans forward while walking, takes shorter strides while walking or uses his or her hands to protect the shoulders from the straps, it is an indication the backpack is too heavy.**

**If the backpack is too heavy, talk to your child's teacher. Ask if your child could leave the heaviest books at school, and bring home only lighter hand-out materials or workbooks.**

**If your child continues to complain of pain and strain from a heavy backpack, come see us... We will help alleviate your child's pain and help prevent further injury.**

**Kayser Chiropractic and Acupuncture**

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