

# HOW TO PREVENT BACKPACK OVERLOAD

## 1 Clean out the backpack.

Remove extra pairs of running shoes, soda bottles, CDs (if more than five), and all electronic games.

## 2 Pack only the necessary books.

All books do not need to go to and from school every day.

## 3 Buy a second set of books.

Keep a set of textbooks, usually the heaviest books, at home, so the books don't need to be transported. Alternatively, photocopy the entire book at the beginning of the year and instruct your child to take home only those pages necessary for each day's assignment.

## 4 Hire a neighborhood sherpa.

Pay a sibling, larger neighborhood child, or teamster to carry the load.

## 5 Affix saddlebags to your dog.

Bike stores usually sell a variety of different-sized bags that can be slung across a dog's back. Use only large dogs and watch for overload.



## 6 Ship the books overnight directly to school.

As long as your child completes his homework by 8 P.M., you should be able to ship the books for next-day delivery at a courier's local drop box. Specify that the books should arrive for "early delivery" to ensure that they make it to school before your child's first class of the day.

### Be Aware

- A backpack should never rest 4 inches or more below the waistline or be wider than the shoulders.
- Symptoms of backpack overload include pain or numbness in the arms, shoulders, and mid- to lower back; jaw pain; neck pain; and headache. If the child reports any of these symptoms, consult a healthcare professional.