



BIGELOW MIDDLE SCHOOL

Respect • Responsibility • Love of Learning

Bigelow School Council
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Choosing a Backpack

The American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons recommends that a backpack weigh no more than 10-15% of a child's body weight. However, books and binders, sports gear, instruments, a lunch box and other items all add up quickly and can easily weigh 15 lbs or more. In an effort to alleviate this problem, Bigelow's school supply lists are organized carefully and include items that should be kept at home.

Another way that parents can help to "lighten the load" is to purchase a **lightweight** backpack that has at least some of the following features that provide support:

- Wide, padded shoulder straps
- A padded back
- A waist belt (but only useful if student uses it)
- Multiple compartments to distribute weight evenly

There are a wide variety of backpacks on the market, and ultimately, you must choose one that is best for your child and for your family's budget. A couple of lightweight varieties that have many helpful features are:

- Land's End, "Classmate Large." Full-price cost is \$49:
https://www.landsend.com/products/classmate-large-backpack---solid/id_300492
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- L.L. Bean "Deluxe Book Pack." Full-price cost is \$39.95:
<https://www.llbean.com/llb/shop/62852?page=llbean-deluxe-book-pack>
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Both packs can be ordered on-line, and you might watch the web sites for spring sales.

You can also help your child wear the backpack well, by encouraging him or her to:

- Only bring the items needed for that day
- Pack heavier items on the bottom of the pack & use compartments to distribute the weight
- Use both shoulder straps
- Tighten the shoulder straps so that the backpack fits close to the body
- Use the waist belt if the backpack has one

To read more, please visit the following sites:

- <http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/backpack.html#>
- http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/08/27/what-heavy-backpacks-are-doing-to-kids-bodies-_n_5700485.html