

TIP OF THE MONTH: BACKPACKS

On our [Facebook site](#), we've been offering great ideas for making this a smooth school year for your child. PT Shoshana Newman reminded us there of the importance of your child both using an age-appropriate backpack and wearing it correctly to reduce back strain. Pediatric Potential's founder **Laurie Kalb** offers these additional tips for backpack use now that we're several weeks into the school year:

Have you weighed your child's backpack? If it is greater than 10% of your child's weight (and it probably is), here's what can you do:

- Keep essential school supplies in an organized place in your home.** Leave duplicates in the school desk or locker, not in the backpack.
- Consider buying an extra set of books (particularly the heavy texts).** Have one set at home and one at school.
- Keep extra paper at home.** Send just enough to school.
- If your teacher requires certain binders, see if there's a lightweight version.**
- Will your child accept a rolling backpack?**
- Try to unload the backpack daily to eliminate empty lunch containers, etc.** Your child will of course resist a daily clean out, but at least make it a Sunday night ritual.
- Buy lightweight notebooks and transfer completed work to larger looseleaves or folders stored at home.**
- Avoid large water bottles and cans of food.** Buy small versions for the small child.
- Leave the gizmos home!**