

NEWS

OF CHILDREN

Lightening The Load?

(NAPSA)—Occupational therapists are alarmed that heavy school backpacks are putting the nation's students at risk, so they have teamed up with a leading retailer to promote safer backpack use.



Heavy school backpacks can cause a variety of problems and injuries in children.

The American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) and L.L. Bean Inc. recently launched a campaign offering tips for selecting, loading, and wearing school backpacks. Information is available on the Web at www.aota.org and www.llbean.com.

"Every year, we're seeing more children with stooped shoulders, sore necks and aching backs from carrying school backpacks, and we can't afford to put our children at risk for a lifetime of chronic health problems," says Joseph C. Isaacs, AOTA executive director.

More than one-fourth of AOTA's 45,000 members work with children in schools and communities. AOTA says students should carry no more than 15 percent of their body weight in a school backpack. This means a child who weighs 100 pounds should not carry a backpack weighing over 15 pounds.