



Pediatric Development Center

Newsletter August 2007

We provide occupational therapy evaluation, treatment and consultation for children with developmental delays, autism/Asperger, cerebral palsy, Down's syndrome, sensory processing disorders, attention, behavioral concerns, handwriting, and other areas of weakness.
361 US Route One, Falmouth
(207) 781-4830

Parent Support Group:

We want to support parents in any way we can and would like to have a monthly meeting to discuss your issues. Please call the office to let us know when would be good for you and we will put together a meeting. 781-4830

Backpacks

Carrying too much weight and/or carrying it the wrong way can lead to pain and strain.

There are steps that you as a parent can take to help make sure it easier and safer to carry their backpack.

Never let the child carry more than **15%** of their body weight. This means that if a child weighs 100 pounds their bag should weigh no more than 15 pounds.

LOADING IT

Place heaviest items closest to the child's back.

Arrange items so they don't slide around in the backpack.

Check what your child brings to school and what they bring home to ensure they are not carrying items that are not necessary.

On days that the backpack is too heavy have the child hand carry a book or other item.

If the backpack is consistently too heavy consider using a bag on wheels if it is allowed at the school.

WEARING IT

Make sure they use both straps at all times.
When a bag is worn only over one shoulder it can cause the child to lean to one side, curving the spine and causing pain or discomfort.

Select a bag with well-padded shoulder straps.
There are lots of blood vessels and nerves in the neck and shoulders that can cause pain and tingling in the neck, arms and hands when too much pressure is applied.

Tighten shoulder straps to ensure that the pack fits snugly to their back.
A pack that hangs too loosely can pull the child backwards and cause strain on the muscles.

If the pack has a waist belt make sure it is worn as it can help distribute the weight more evenly.
The bottom of the pack should rest in the curve of the lower back. It should never rest more than four inches below the child's waistline.

A.M. ORGANIZATION

Doorknob reminders. With the complicated schedules kids have to follow these days, a friendly checklist of what needs to be done in the morning and what needs to be brought to school can be a real life saver. Organized by day of the week and personalized according to each child's schedule, the list can easily be updated as the reminding needs change. This can be done on the computer and printed on card stock. Trim to half a vertical sheet, slip into a plastic sheet protector, fold the plastic in half lengthwise, and punch a hole at the top through all layers. Attach a coil wrist chain for hanging. For a moveable arrow make it out of craft foam and hot glue a mini clothespin to the back.

Punchball

Next time your gang is looking for a game of baseball but you are a bit short on players give this game a try.

- *set up a small baseball diamond, using anything to mark the bases.

- *divide into 2 teams (one on the field and the other up to bat).

- *instead of using a bat and baseball, batters toss a tennis ball or rubber playground ball in the air (or bounce it off the ground) and slap or punch it for a hit. As in baseball, each player gets 3 tries before he's out, and runs when he gets a hit.



The Name Game

- *Using chalk, draw a grid with eight squares on the pavement and write a subject in each. Some possible subjects are fruits, animals, TV shows, colors, cereals, ice cream flavors and videos.

- *The first player stands outside of the grid and bounces the ball into one square at a time, announcing something that fits the category as he/she runs to catch the ball before it bounces again.

- *The player repeats this process until he/she has called out something for every square in the grid.

- *The next child then takes a turn. The trick is that players can't call out anything already named by any preceding player.

- *When someone can't think of anything else to name, he/she is out of the game.