

# Moms give tips on what to pack on students' backs

It used to be lunch pails and straps around books. Then it was book bags and pencil cases. Now it's backpacks and you can tell the age of the student by the face on the pack.

The younger set have the Lion King, Barbie and the Mighty Morphin Power Rangers. Older students want them either plain or with a message — social, political or environmental — that they add themselves. And while most backpacks don't look like they've been dragged through the mud, very few of them look particularly pristine.

But never mind about the outside. It's what's inside that counts. We asked some mothers what they put in the backpack and here's what they told us.

1. Depending on the season, put in extra mittens and an extra pair of socks. In winter, mitts can be lost or get wet with snow. Snow can go down the boots and soak the feet and that's when a dry pair of socks will be appreciated.

2. A rain jacket or a sweater. Sometimes your child doesn't want to wear them to school, but will appreciate them if it turns colder or

starts to rain.

3. An umbrella, if you're not sure what the weather will be like. The telescoping ones fit nicely in a backpack.

4. A hat. An extra warm one in the winter and a baseball cap or something similar when summer arrives and the sun starts beating down.

5. Sunglasses to wear on those bright, sunny days out in the playground.

6. Suntan lotion. Gotta watch out for the sun's rays. And bug repellent if you live in an area where bugs are a problem.

7. Chapstick or a similar lip gloss. It helps prevent dryness in the winter and sunburn in the summer.

8. A couple of Band-aids. The school nurse should have some, but sometimes it helps little hurts to have the familiar ones from home.

9. Snacks. Every parent mentioned putting something to eat in the backpack. Common suggestions: crackers, cheese, carrot sticks, celery sticks, cookies, fruit, and drinks.

10. Kleenex, especially in the winter or if the child has a cold.



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