

# Weighty bags affects spine

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CHILDREN are at risk of developing spinal deformities if they carry oversized, heavy school bags and the weighty luggage could also interfere with a child's brain performance.

This is according to Dr Robert Delgado, a corrective care chiropractor and lifestyle coach who explained that by carrying heavy school bags children were developing forward head posture as they were leaning forward at the hips to compensate for the heavy weight on their backs.

'This strains the muscles and pushes the body to go into an unnatural posture alignment,' he said.

'While children might not experience pain straight away, in the long term they are developing imbalances in the body, which can affect the health of the nervous system.

'Furthermore, it affects the brain as when the alignment of the spine is unbalanced the communication between the brain and the body is negatively affected,' Delgado said.

The Chiropractic Association of South Africa says improper school bag or backpack use is an often-overlooked cause of back pain and bags should not hang more than 10cm below the waistline.

Empangeni teacher Maningi Mbutho, who has been in the primary education field for more than 10 years, said it was imperative



Grade 4 Empangeni pupil Anzelle Swart carries all her books to and from school.

for parents to attend school meetings as it opens a platform for discussion addressing several issues including the weight of backpacks.

'Pupils take home, on average, only four books, excluding their reading books.

'Carrying all their books to and fro is unnecessary and furthermore, lunch and sports attire is shoved in too,' Mbutho said.