

## 4 Ways To Add Fitness Fun To Back To School Prep



Kids might be very excited to be going back to school, or to be starting school for the first time. They likely have a backpack and/or a lunchbox. Maybe they even have some new shoes they are excited to wear.

With school starting we have to add ONE more thing to our plate (For a good reason, it's important!). It might be easy to believe that with school starting kids will be off the couch and away from the TV so they will finally be moving more, BUT this sadly is not the reality. Between the bus rides or carpooling, sitting in the class, homework AND reduced physical activities due to ongoing pandemic concerns, kids are most likely NOT going to be getting enough exercise.

As adults we may feel overwhelmed trying to fit exercise and movement into our day, so how are we even supposed to make sure we are helping our kids get enough age appropriate movement in?

Here's a way to do it! We've taken a basic idea such as **packing a backpack and lunchbox** and turned it into a playful fitness activity for kids of all ages! We even broke down some age appropriate skills you can add in depending on how old your kids are.

First of all, make sure the bags are not too heavy! I know my 4 year old always wants to show me how strong he is, but you also want to make sure you are loading their bags appropriately. Carrying bags that are too heavy overtime causes individuals to lean forward. Over time this can cause the shoulders to become rounded and the upper back to become curved. Because of the heavy weight, there's a chance of developing shoulder, neck, and back pain and lead to bad posture. To prevent this, ask them to practice walking with it and help them learn how to put it on and take it off safely. (Hey, we're fitness pros and we're all about safe movement even when it's outside class OR in daily living because we know that's where a lot of injuries happen to kids!!)



1. **Create a pile of the items they need to Practice Packing their bags.** There are several fun ways you can go about doing this. Depending on the age of the kids, you can even create a scavenger hunt to gather all the items. This is a great way to have them feel various objects to see how heavy each might be and even to learn some fine motor skills like packing a bag.
2. **Have them help make their lunch!** According to a report from the NIH, research shows that involving children in food preparation could be an opportunity to develop healthy eating behaviors and to increase vegetable consumption. This is a great way to teach kids more about nutrition, plus it's a great way to have them move around while helping out! Make it fun with shape cutters and color coordinated packages!
3. **Try on their shoes** and now have them practice moving in different directions. Hop on foot, walk quietly, slide backwards, jump side-to-side...or simply recreate ways they'd walk in school through a busy hallway by using obstacles.
4. **Practice walking with everything** they will need to take many items to school with them and need to work on coordination. Perhaps make a balancing game, or have a race to pick everything up. Another idea if you live close to school would be to practice the walk, OR drive there and practice finding the doors and exploring the playground.

All of these action items above are helping kids move more. They are literally moving around helping to pack up their bags and get their lunch ready. By adding in some play you are literally teaching kids that even something as simple as packing their bags can be fun and create more movement. For kids that might be a little more nervous about school this is a great time to talk about how it will be fun and help them learn and grow more. Hopefully these 4 activities show you how easy it can be to turn an everyday activity, like prepping for back to school, and twist it to add in more fitness and fun.

Such a simple idea now becomes fun, playful, educational and conversational!

Want to learn more about becoming a Student Fitness Expert? Visit our [website](#) and sign up for our fall workshop waitlist!

