



**SUPPORT:** Joel Talbot made sure his backpack wasn't just comfortable on his first day in Year 1. **Photo:** Emma Channon

## Heavy backpacks a hazard for children

By **SHANNON NEWLEY**

CHILDREN have to pile too many things into their backpacks and it's causing long-term problems, Back to Health chiropractor Matthew Lonsdale said.

"We have quite a few kids on the books and the majority of them are impacted by backpacks," he said.

"With parents we always talk about weights, the issue is they don't seem to be able to reduce weight because you have a huge amount of books kids have to carry."

He said parents should try to keep the weight of packs at 10 per cent of a child's weight – but he realised it was increasingly difficult.

"With kids in grade one, they might only weigh 40kg, so we are talking only 4kg for backpacks," Mr Lonsdale said.

"That might only be a lunch box and drink bottle."

Mr Lonsdale said like school shoes, parents often bought packs a size too big so children could grow into them but this also caused issues.

"Unfortunately in these economic times the additional

### BACKPACK TIPS

- Backpacks should be no heavier than 10% of a student's weight.
  - It should be sturdy and no wider than the student's chest
  - Choose one with broad, padded shoulder straps
  - Use both shoulder straps - never sling the pack over one shoulder and use waist straps
  - Don't wear lower than the hollow of the lower back
  - Use lockers and plan homework in advance
  - Place heavy items at base of pack, close to the spine, for better weight distribution
- (Source: Chiropractor's Association of Australia)

cost is hard but they might need a backpack every six months especially if they go through a rapid growth spurt," he said.

"But the damage they do now may impact them in later life."

## Pupils gear up for school

**What:** First day back at school

**Where:** Warwick East, West state schools

**When:** Yesterday afternoon



**KINDY TIME:** Meghan Crothers had her first day of kindergarten yesterday, with mum Lisa. **Photos:** Georja Ryan



**BIG SISTER:** Tiffany Boyce started prep yesterday, with big sister Symantha by her side as she steps into year 7.



**SIBLING HUG:** Bianca Maloney hugs younger brother Matthew after his first day as a prep student at Warwick West. **Photos:** Emma Channon



**FULL FAMILY:** Tegan Lamb joined siblings Stacey, Reece and Shane Lamb when she started prep at Warwick West State School yesterday.



**FIRST DAY FUN:** Georgia Wilhelmi, Maddie Thomson and sister Elena Thomson had a good first day back.

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