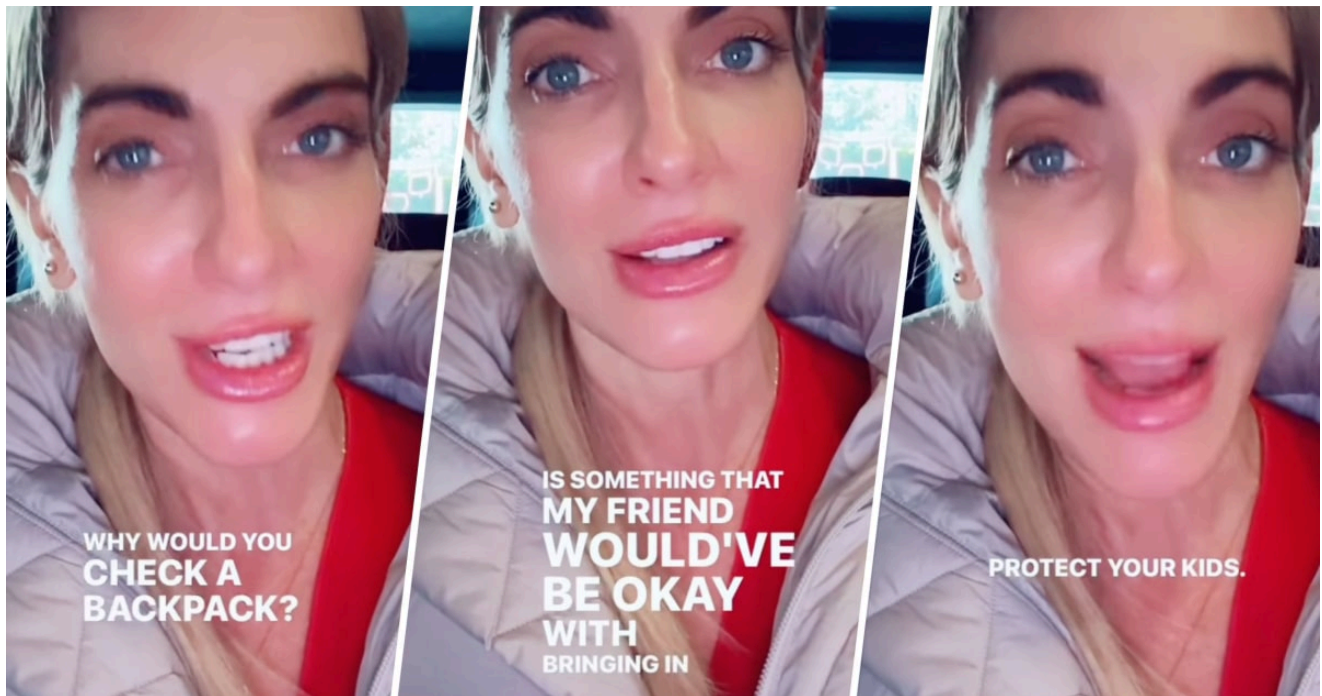


Why This Mom Checks ‘Every Backpack’ On a Playdate

 www.today.com/parents/moms/check-children-backpacks-playdates-rcna227024

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Do you ever snoop through your child’s backpack? A mom of five says to do it.

“It’s your home and we are in a new world,” the mom, who goes by “Lovey Edge” on social media, tells [TODAY.com](https://www.today.com).

As Edge shared on Instagram:

“I just brought my 9-year-old to a playdate and he had a backpack for the first time and I said, ‘Son, I’m going to need to check your backpack,’” Edge said in her video. “He goes, ‘I’m just bringing some fun things over to my friend’s house ... What are you checking for?’”

Edge continued: “I said, ‘Just to make sure everything you’re leaving with is something that my friend would be OK with bringing in their home.’”

According to Edge, she encouraged the father of her child’s friend to check her son’s bag, too.

“He goes, ‘What are we checking for — contraband? They’re only 9!’” she said in the video.

“I said, ‘Checking a backpack is a lot easier at 9 than 15 and if you start doing it now, when they’re 15, it’s not going to be such a big deal,’” Edge said in the video. “Trust me: I learned the hard way. Check every backpack that comes in and out of your home.”

Parents who “learned the hard way” commented on Instagram.

- “Just checked my 7 year old and 4 year old’s backpacks. Rocks and sticks!”
- “10-year-old ... cousin packed his own luggage on the way back from a vacation in Europe — airport security found his grandfather’s antique gun. Check the backpack.”
- “My daughter tried to take 15 ladybugs to school one time. I looked like a lunatic in the school parking lot, shaking it out.”
- “Yep. My 9 year old steals toys. So we check bags all the time.”
- “I have to do ‘snake checks’ in my son’s backpack because this boy has brought home so many dang reptiles.”
- “I was this kid. I used to leave the house in sweatpants to ‘sleep over at a friend’s house.’ Meanwhile, my backpack was full of party clothes, heels, and makeup.”

Edge, whose other children are adults, tells TODAY.com that ahead of her 9-year-old son’s playdate, she learned that his peers were bringing props to play a fantasy game. Her son’s bag, she says, contained drawings and toy figurines.

“He said, so-and-so is bringing things we can use as weapons,” recalls Edge. While Edge learned the “weapon” was made from paper, she says checking kept her informed.

“It’s total transparency to build trust and uphold our integrity when we go to people’s homes,” she explains.

Edge says she doesn’t mind if other parents check her son’s backpack — and she checks the belongings of her child’s friends when they come over.

Should parents check their kids’ backpacks?

“If this is a policy in your home, then it’s a policy in your home,” [Deborah Gilboa](#), a family doctor and resilience expert, tells TODAY.com in an email, adding that it’s sensible for these parents to also check other children’s bags on playdates.

Gilboa says backpack checks don’t necessarily mean that parents distrust their kids.

“It’s about protecting your family and helping your kids make good choices,” she clarifies.

Gilboa says that backpack checks should not be forever.

“There has to be a transfer of power — a slow, gradual, earned transfer of responsibility for what kids carry,” she says. “You might say, ‘Throughout middle school, I always check, as part of how I keep you safe. It’s like checking to see if you brushed your teeth.’”

Gilboa says when kids wrap up middle school and are in high school, “They need to earn some autonomy and trust — which means, when they screw up, you step it back and say, ‘OK, looks like I need to be checking more frequently again.’ But you should get to a point

where, at 18, they're leaving the house and you're not ever checking."

To not "go from zero to 60," Gilboa says parents could start checking the backpacks of younger kids, planning to eventually stop, unless a child makes a bad decision.

"Consider how you are helping build responsibility and trust between you and your child," says Gilboa.



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