



Packing a Bag 101

**Every bag contains the following:
PJs, blanket, stuffed animal, toiletries, and a nightlight or flashlight**

Please be aware of the following when choosing the required items:

Backpacks – Diaper bags, duffel bags, or small kid-sized suitcases are all acceptable. Please do not use sling packs or bags without zippers as the items tend to fall out. We do accept used bags as long as they do not appear used. Check for wear on the bottom, for broken zippers, or a child's name or address written inside or out. Dollar Store bags generally do not hold up as well as more expensive bags. Do **NOT** remove the outer tags as this is how we attach the Backpacks of Hope tag that inventories the items in the bag and identifies which size/gender of PJs are inside.

PJs – PJs should be modest. Please do not purchase nightgowns but instead purchase 2 piece sets. For older kids and teens, lounge pants and a t-shirt or sweatshirt are fine. Do not include obvious holiday themes like Christmas, Easter, or Halloween as we never know when a bag will be delivered to a child.

Blankets – Choose an age-appropriate blanket. Swaddling blankets or crib-sized blankets are perfect for the smallest recipients. Blankets should be no larger than 5'X6'. We love handmade blankets!

Stuffed animals – We put stuffed animals in all of the backpacks, including those intended for teens. This decision was made after talking to social workers and foster parents who were in agreement that even the teens should get a stuffed animal of some kind. For some teens, this is the first stuffed animal they have ever received, or maybe the individual is functioning at a lower emotional level than their age. We also don't have any idea what it is like to be moved to a foster home with nothing but the clothes we are wearing. We don't know until we give it away what effect this item will have on the owner. If you don't know what to get, consider a stuffed football, popular movie figure, or a stuffed animal that could sit on a shelf.

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We do accept used stuffed animals as long as they do not look used. We will not accept stuffies that show obvious wear, are ripped, have missing tags or a tag with a child's name written on it. Please do not purchase Dollar Store stuffed animals as these tend to tear easily.

***Please note** that if your bag is being packed for a newborn or toddler, the tag *must* state that the stuffed animal is acceptable for all ages.

Toiletries – All toiletries should be age-appropriate for the child that will fit into the PJs you have included. As a general rule, think about the size as the age (example: 3T would be around the age of a 3 year old and 10/12 would be around age 10).

Suggestions for babies and toddlers: Age-appropriate toothbrush and toothpaste, hand sanitizer, wipes, gentle shampoo and baby wash, diaper rash ointment, etc.

Suggestions for elementary school children: Age-appropriate toothbrush and toothpaste, children's shampoo, conditioner, and wash (can often find them in a combo bottle), chapstick, pack of tissues, brush or comb, loofah, etc.

Suggestions for teens: Toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, conditioner, and wash, lotion, chapstick, deodorant, make-up wipes for girls, brush or comb, loofah, etc.

Nightlights – Put one in each bag for ages newborn – 3.

Flashlights – Put one in each bag for ages 4+. It is helpful to include batteries if they are not included with the flashlight you purchase.

We like to stuff the bag as full as possible so you can fill it up with any of the following: Underwear, socks, age-appropriate games, toys, or books, coloring book with crayons (or colored pencils for older children), school supplies, hat, gloves, or scarf, etc.

Each bag goes to a child in Central PA as they are transitioning into foster care. If you have questions about your donation or to locate donation bins, please see our website: ourfathershope.org or contact us on our FB page: www.facebook.com/pabackpacksofhope/

Thank you for your donation!