

## Don't Be Caught Off Guard: Simple Steps Can Deter School Thefts

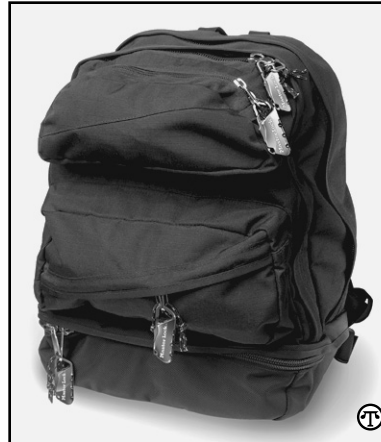
(NAPSA)—Did you know that an estimated 2.1 million students, ages 12 to 18 annually are victims of a theft that occurred in their school?

A recent study found that 62 percent of all crimes committed in school involve theft. Not to mention the feeling of being violated, the result can be hundreds of dollars in replacement costs for personal items, including jackets, shoes, books and sports equipment, as well as the loss of irreplaceable items such as class notes.

Spend some time discussing a few simple precautionary steps with your child to help protect him or her from school-based theft. Follow these guidelines compiled by Master Lock Co., a leader in security related products:

1. Purchase a strong lock you can trust at the beginning of the school year or sports season.
2. Encourage your child to never leave his or her locker unlocked between classes or after school.
3. Explain to your child the importance of not sharing his or her combination with anyone; be sure to remove the combination fixed to the back of any locks you buy.
4. Buy a quality lock for your child's book bag and sports bag to use when he or she must leave them unattended at an event or practice. Ideally, belongings should be kept in a locker or designated safe spot.
5. Don't allow your child to bring valuables such as CD players, cameras and cell phones to school, unless they are needed for a school project.

This is the time to start thinking about how to protect your child from theft by taking the necessary precautions. And today when you shop for a school lock,



**Backpack locks provide additional security at school.**

you have more options than the typical key or combination lock.

Locks come in a variety of colors and looks designed to appeal to younger buyers—color-coordinated dials, lock bodies with marbled patterns and cobra or zebra stripes. Backpack locks are also available in a variety of bright colors.

But also consider the locking mechanics. Just because a lock looks “cool,” it doesn't necessarily mean that it's a quality lock you can trust. Master Lock Co. continuously introduces colorful locks while still providing the internal mechanics with the well-known security you can rely on. Look for locks with a hardened steel shackle and permanently lubricated inner parts. You can even find three-wheel combination locks for backpacks, luggage and other items that are closed with a zipper, that include a set-your-own combination feature to allow for customization—and additional security. Particularly tough cable locks are also available to secure bikes.

For additional security tips and options, visit [www.masterlock.com](http://www.masterlock.com).