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From the Editor

As I write *From the Editor* two images come to mind. The first one is walking into my middle school child's computer technology classroom and being struck by the intensity of the atmosphere...students huddled closely over their computers monitors, seated awkwardly in a chair either too large or too small for their stature, their wrists in various contorted positions, and the sun glaring in their eyes. The second vivid image is driving past five or six students waiting at a school bus stop, each heavily laden with backpacks so that their movements made them look more like beasts of burden. These snapshot images provided the catalyst for my research program at Boston University being dedicated to healthy computing and backpack safety in youth. Four of these projects are reported in this issue.

The inception of an issue of *WORK* devoted to youth and ergonomics came when I was attending the "Children and Information Technology" workshop at John Hopkins University's Center for Information Technology and Health Research in June 2001. This symposium of presentations and discussions brought together international experts with diverse backgrounds, e.g., academic researchers, computer hardware and software industry representatives, government agencies' staff, furniture manufacturers, social advocates, educators, medical and health professions; and resulted in the identification of the highest priorities needs for research on children and information technology. Six participants of the symposium have shared their research in this issue of *WORK* and have greatly added to this limited body of knowledge.

To those of you interested in youth and ergonomics, here are some questions identified at the symposium that greatly need to be addressed:

1. What are the relevant outcome and exposure measures and their applicability and validity for children?
2. What is the impact of information technology on cognitive, social, emotional/mental health and physical development (school vs. non-school)?
3. How can information technology promote health among children?
4. Are the children who have discomfort now, the same individuals who will experience problems in adulthood? Is childhood discomfort a predictor of adult disorders?
5. What are the psychosocial, emotional health concerns of information technology use for children?
6. What is the most effective way of integrating ergonomic training in schools?

As always, I welcome hearing from you.

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