

# **Instructions for using the HowdaHUG**

## **Getting in and out**

- To get into the HUG, sit on the floor, open the HUG, then slide back into the chair until your hips are flush with the bottom hinge. To get out of the chair, scoot forward out of the chair, fold the chair flat, roll onto your knees, hold the “closed” seat as a post to use as leverage to stand up.

## **Tightening and loosening**

- Sit in the HUG so that the loose ends of the straps are facing downward. To tighten the straps, lean forward slightly and pull down firmly on the straps. To loosen the straps, lift up on the black plastic buckle and lean back gently. Note that the HowdaHUG does not have a ‘front and back,’ and can be used on either slat side, but generally you position the seat so that when sitting on the bottom, you can pull down on the adjustable straps (at the same time) to tighten evenly (the loose end of the straps will be below the buckles.)
- NOTE that the D-Ring buckles are hard to adjust on purpose. This, so the child will not “fidget” with them. Please see that a teacher or parent makes the appropriate adjustment.
- Gauge tightening the straps based on what the HowdaHUG is sitting on i.e. floor, school chair, couch, dining room chair etc., for the appropriate degree of comfort per individual child. It is best to be snug, but not so much that the child has to bend forward to sit up straight. The tightness (proprioception/deep pressure) is what is calming. The seat should also cradle them when they rock back in it, with legs bent at the knees and feet flat on the floor.

## **The thrill of tipping backwards**

- HowdaHUGs are a great way to allow a child to move without being disruptive. One of the first things most children will do in their HUG is tip backwards, because they have not yet learned how to balance the chair. Most children will “fall” all the way back (and often enjoy sticking their feet up in the air). Tipping all the way back and coming back up independently or with assistance is a great core strengthening exercise that can be used during sensory breaks or therapy sessions.

## **Rocking and balancing**

- Once a child gets the hang of tipping back without falling over, she can learn to balance and rock comfortably. This can be very calming for many children and the movement is so subtle that it does not disrupt others during circle time. When rocking or balancing, the more a child pushes against the HUG, the more proprioceptive (deep pressure) input they receive.

## **Safety first!**

- In order to reduce the possibility of injury, an adult should sit with a child the first time they try out the HUG. Sitting the child in front of a wall, a sturdy bookcase that will not tip, or a large floor cushion, will allow the child to tip back without getting hurt. The floor pillow is often the best thing to place behind a child because they can then tip all the way back and experience the sensation of “how far is too far” and “how do I problem-solve getting back up”.

## **Additional sensory input (fleece liner/weighted lap pad)**

- In addition to the HowdaHUG, Howda Designz makes two types of fleece liners for the seats. One is a cap that fits over the top edge of the chair. The other is a liner that hooks over the top and bottom edges and lines the whole seat (see photo). For children who want or need softer input or more of a cuddle sensation, the fleece liners are a great addition to the HowdaHUG experience.
- If a child needs additional deep pressure while in the HowdaHUG, we recommend using a weighted lap pillow. This type of weighted item will not interfere with how the HowdaHUG fits the child and gives even more comfort, especially if the lap pad is made with interesting material that the child can rub for tactile input.