

I am an independent clinician that became involved with the articulating chair as a result of my teaching. It has always been my concern that locking kids into chairs with rigid postural supports does nothing to further their strength and motor development. Rather like the weakness seen after the removal of a cast, our kids go through a similar process of progressive weakness, if they ever had strength at all. If they are going to develop head and trunk control in sitting, they must be provided with opportunities to strengthen and develop the musculature to allow for head and trunk control. The other concern is that kids are dynamic individuals. Through excitement, distal movement, weight shift for comfort etc. they are constantly moving. If they move against a rigid support, they displace and are rarely able to realign. They require assistance from others to return to their original posture. An articulating chair allows for this movement, but returns them to their original position.

The Kids Up chair was developed out of frustration. There was really nothing else out there for our kids. Wayne Hanson, who designed the Kid Kart, and Gregor Horacek, who designed the Horacek line of chairs and strollers (Kimba, Lisa, Nurmi, etc.), put their heads together, and the articulating Kids Rock Active was born. Once the design was complete, Dr Hahn, from the University of Montana received a Grant which allowed the chair to be independently evaluated in a clinical setting with children who were able to use the chairs in their own home and school settings. The chair is quite unique, not only in function, but also in this process of development under clinical guidelines while using the experience of people who had been in the field of pediatric seating for years. This team provided an understanding of the history of seating and where it had failed, while motivating them to go a different direction.

Personally, I would hope that the direction that we have gone over the last 10-15 years will be re-evaluated. There is an application for rigid support in seating systems, but there is also a need for dynamic movement in a seating system, particularly with children who can develop skill and muscle strength if provided the opportunity.

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