

Cool Kids Online

INTERNET DELIVERED CHILD ANXIETY TREATMENT (AGES 7-12 YRS)

The Cool Kids Program is a world renowned cognitive behavioural therapy program developed at Macquarie University, Centre for Emotional Health, to teach children and parents skills that address anxiety disorders. In this research study, we have developed an online delivery format for the Cool Kids Program.

ABOUT THE CENTRE FOR EMOTIONAL HEALTH

The Centre for Emotional Health (CEH) is an internationally recognised specialist research centre aimed at furthering our understanding of child and adult emotional disorders and improving methods of treatment. Families who seek help at the CEH will receive state of the art assessment and treatment based on research that has been conducted by our team over the past 20 years.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY?

The Cool Kids Program is a face-to-face program aimed at treating anxiety disorders in children and adolescents. The Centre for Emotional Health has developed and conducted numerous research studies into this program and has found that the Cool Kids program is effective in reducing symptoms of anxiety in children and adolescents.

The Cool Kids **Online** program is based on the same fundamental principles as the face-to-face Cool Kids program, but is presented via a computer interface. The purpose of the current study is to evaluate the efficacy of our Cool Kids program when delivered online. Internet delivery provides the opportunity to engage both parent and child using an interactive delivery format and to support families using electronic technologies.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THE COOL KIDS ONLINE PROGRAM?

- Allows families not located in Sydney to receive access to the Cool Kids Program.
- Families are able to complete treatment lessons at their own pace and at a convenient time each week.
- The interactive online format is engaging for children.
- Cool Kids Online is a research treatment study, so we are able to offer access to the Cool Kids treatment program for free.

WHO IS THE COOL KIDS ONLINE STUDY DESIGNED FOR?

The Cool Kids Online program is suitable for your child if:

- He or she is aged between 7 and 12 years old.
- Anxiety is the main problem your child is experiencing
- Anxiety is significantly affecting his or her day-to-day life.
- He or she is not accessing other psychological treatment (except medication). NOTE: Medication should be stable (same type and dose) before starting and during treatment.
- You and your child are proficient in English (e.g., able to read and comprehend one page of an English newspaper).

The Cool Kids Online program is *not* suitable for your child if he or she is currently experiencing any of the following issues:

- Significant learning delays, developmental or intellectual disorders.
- Autism or related disorders.
- Significant unmanaged behavioural disorder.
- Considered at risk (i.e., due to abuse, neglect, suicidal ideation, self-harm or school refusal).
- Unmanaged psychotic symptoms.

These exclusions are in place to ensure that our treatment program is delivered to children who are most likely to benefit from the program and for whom we are best equipped to offer services. Each child will be carefully assessed to determine whether our treatment is really the most appropriate or whether other programs or services may better meet their needs.



WHAT DOES THE STUDY INVOLVE?

- An initial assessment to determine if our program is likely to be suitable and beneficial for your child,
- A 10 week treatment program (immediately or after a 10 week wait) that you complete online at home with the help of a therapist over the phone, and
- Progress assessments, which are scheduled depending on the condition you are randomly allocated to.

WHAT DO THE ASSESSMENTS INVOLVE?

Assessments are conducted before your family commences treatment as well as after treatment. All assessments involve you and your child being interviewed over the telephone by a psychologist and completing questionnaires about thoughts, feelings and behaviours.

- The purpose of the *initial* assessment is to determine if our program is suitable for your child. After the initial assessment, if you decide that you do not want to proceed with treatment you will have 3 months to take up the offer before needing to complete another initial assessment. It is important for us to have current information about your child. If the program is not considered to be suitable for your child, you will be provided with alternative referral options that would best suit your needs.
- *Progress* assessments are conducted after the 10 week wait, immediately after treatment, and 6 months after treatment. The purpose of the progress assessment is to determine if there have been changes in anxiety.

WHAT DOES TREATMENT INVOLVE?

If the program is suitable for your child and you decide to participate, you and your child will be randomly allocated to one of two conditions.

- One condition involves waiting 10 weeks for access to the Cool Kids Online program.
- The other condition involves accessing the Cool Kids Online program immediately.

The Cool Kids Online Program involves completing 8, 60 minute online lessons over a 10 week period. The program adopts a cognitive behavioural approach, that is, it teaches specific strategies for anxiety management including thinking more realistically, problem solving and gradual exposure to anxiety provoking situations. You and your child will work through the program **together**, and receive weekly brief (10 min) phone calls from a therapist.

Cool Kids Online will teach you and your child the skills you need to manage anxiety and build confidence. As a parent, your role will be as your child's coach. You will help your child put the new skills they learn into practice and most importantly, you will give them support and encouragement along the way.

The Cool Kids Online Therapist will:

- Address any questions about the program material,
- Assist you in understanding the online material,
- Help guide you through any problems.

"As a Cool Kids coach, you have an important role in helping your child face their fears and build their confidence so that anxiety has less of an influence on their life."

WHO DECIDES WHICH CONDITION WE ARE IN?

The condition to which you are allocated is decided randomly, like drawing names out of a hat. The decision as to which therapist you will have is also decided randomly.

WHO WILL BE THE THERAPIST?

All therapists at the CEH are completing specialised training in child and adolescent anxiety and receive ongoing supervision from senior clinical psychologists who have expertise in this area.

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

In return for your participation in our research, there are **no costs** associated with assessment and treatment for the Cool Kids Online study. (For your information, an initial clinical assessment would typically cost \$290. The face-to-face Cool Kids program at the CEH typically costs \$500).

Once your final progress assessment has been completed you will receive \$50 as a thank you for participating in the Cool Kids Online research study.

The Cool Kids Online study is funded by Australian Rotary Health.

WHAT DO I DO NOW?

If you would like to be a part of the Cool Kids Online treatment study or require further information please contact our friendly team at coolkids.online@mq.edu.au, or on (02) 9850 8715. Find out more by visiting <http://www.centreforemotionalehealth.com.au/pages/coolkidsonline.aspx>

FIND OUT MORE

Cool Kids Online Study
Centre for Emotional Health
Macquarie University NSW 2109 Australia
T: +61 (2) 9850 8715
coolkids.online@mq.edu.au

CRICOS Provider 00002J



MACQUARIE
University