

Cool Kids ASD

PROGRAM INFORMATION

The Cool Kids Program is a world renowned cognitive behavioural therapy program developed at Macquarie University to teach children and parents skills that address anxiety disorders. The original program has been adapted to suit the learning style and challenges that arise for children who also have an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The program focuses on teaching children and parents skills to manage anxiety in everyday situations. These skills include:

- Understanding anxiety
- Relaxation
- Parenting strategies that encourage brave behaviour
- Identifying and using helpful (realistic) thoughts, and most importantly,
- Facing fears, building independence and increasing confidence through stepladders (gradual exposure).

Social skills are also touched on in the program as they are often a crucial part of building a child's confidence, however parents should note that social skills are not the primary focus of the program and consequently the program will not replace programs or treatments that focus on social skill development.

The program is offered in both a group format (for children in grades 2 through 6) and on an individual basis (for children and adolescents of any age).

CAN MY CHILD PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROGRAM?

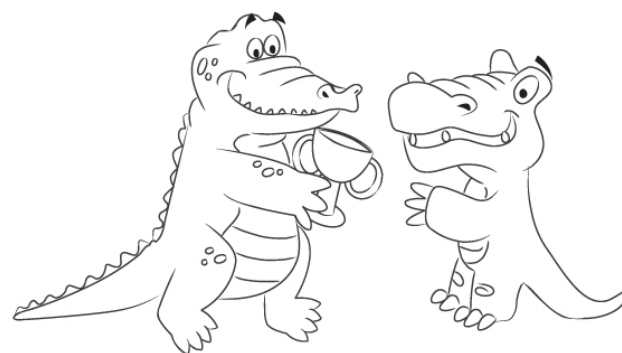
The Cool Kids ASD program is designed for children who:

- have a formal diagnosis of an autism spectrum disorder with an indication that they are considered 'high-functioning'. That is the ASD is described as mild, high functioning, Asperger's, PDD-NOS or level 1 'requiring support'.
- are currently enrolled in a mainstream classroom setting (with or without an aide).

Our program will not be suitable if your child:

- is unable to communicate verbally
- displays significant oppositional, hyperactive or aggressive behaviours
- has significant learning delays (concepts and written work in the program require a grade 2 level of literacy)
- is at risk due to school refusal, abuse, out of home placement, suicidal thoughts or self harming behaviours

These exclusions are in place to ensure that our program is likely to provide benefit to each child. Each child will be carefully assessed to work out whether our program is appropriate or whether other programs or services may be a better fit.



WHAT DOES THE PROGRAM INVOLVE?

INITIAL INDIVIDUAL SESSION

To determine the type of program best suited to your child we will invite you to attend an initial individual session. Both your child and you will attend this appointment and we will ask you both to complete questionnaires about your child's thoughts, feelings and behaviours. The session will include a detailed interview with parents (approximately 1 hour) and a brief one-on-one interview with each child (up to 30 minutes). This session focuses on anxiety only. Information on other difficulties may be gathered however we do not provide comprehensive assessment of other issues such as type of ASD, ADHD or learning problems. A verbal recommendation will be provided to you following the session.

TREATMENT

The Cool Kids ASD program is conducted over approximately 3-4 months. The program can be completed individually (50 minute sessions), in a group setting (2 hour sessions) or by participating in the group and supplementing this with individual sessions to allow one-on-one work for difficult issues if needed.

The recommendation for group or individual will be based on a number of factors including family preference, suitability of a child for the group setting, current waitlist and if a child will 'fit well' with the next available group (for example we may recommend that a Year 6 girl complete individual sessions if the next group already contains predominantly Year 2 and 3 boys).

Sessions are attended by the assessed child and at least one parent (though there is a distinct advantage if both parents are able to attend). Sessions are facilitated by a psychologist or clinical psychologist who has had specialised training in the ASD adaptation of the Cool Kids Program. In group programs a provisional psychologist will attend as a co-therapist and 1-2 assistants will be present to assist with the children when the psychologists are working with parents.

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

If you obtain a *Mental Health Treatment Plan* from your child's GP, psychiatrist or paediatrician you may be able to claim a Medicare Rebate on up to 10 individual and 10 group sessions.

INITIAL INDIVIDUAL SESSION

The cost for the initial individual session to determine the best format for ongoing treatment for your child varies depending on the qualifications of the psychologist conducting the session. The table below sets out the costs for a 90 minute session (including potential Medicare rebate).

Initial Session Cost			
	Up Front Cost	Medicare Rebate**	Out of Pocket
Initial Session – Psychologist	\$247.50	\$84.80	\$162.70
Initial Session – Clinical Psychologist	\$307.50 for	\$124.50	\$183.00

TREATMENT

Treatment costs vary depending on whether you participate in individual or group sessions, or a combination of the two. Treatment costs and rebates also vary depending on the qualifications of the psychologist conducting the sessions. The table below sets out the costs for individual sessions and group programs (including potential Medicare rebate).

Treatment Costs			
	Up Front Cost	Medicare Rebate**	Out of Pocket
Individual Session – Psychologist	\$165 per 50 minute session	\$84.80 per session	\$80.20 per session
Individual Session – Clinical Psychologist	\$205 per 50 minute session	\$124.50 per session	\$80.50 per session
10 Session Group Program – Psychologist	\$1150 paid up front for 10 group sessions	\$21.65 per session attended	\$933.50 by program end
10 Session Group Program – Clinical Psychologist	\$1250 paid up front for 10 group sessions	\$31.65 per session attended	\$933.50 by program end

** Access to the Medicare rebate will be dependent on obtaining the *Mental Health Treatment Plan* and on how many services you have used previously on that plan/within the calendar year. Rebates are only applicable if the session is attended.

As an example of total costs: The following assumes your child has a valid *Mental Health Treatment Plan* covering individual and group sessions (that you have not used elsewhere). The initial session with one of our clinical psychologists will cost \$307.50 and you would receive a rebate of \$124.50. If the recommendation is for the group program and the next program is being facilitated by a psychologist, you will pay \$1150 up front for the program and, if you attend all sessions, at the end of the program you will be able to claim a rebate of \$216.50 from Medicare. If during the program you attend a one-on-one session with the psychologist to work more intensely on a specific issue, this additional session will cost \$165 (paid at the time of the session) and would be eligible for a rebate of \$84.80.



RESEARCH PARTICIPATION

The Centre for Emotional Health prides itself on being a world-leader in research on the causes, assessment and treatment of anxiety. You may be invited to participate in activities that are part of a research study. Participation in these activities is voluntary and if you choose not to participate in a particular study this will have no impact on your participation in the Cool Kids ASD program.

WHAT SHOULD I DO NEXT?

If you would like to take part in the program or if you have any further questions, please contact the Centre for Emotional Health Clinic on **(02) 9850 8711**.

FIND OUT MORE
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