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 needs that arise for children who are also on the Autism Spectrum.

ABOUT COOL KIDS ASA
The Cool Kids Autism Spectrum Adaptation is a 10 session program aimed at treating anxiety disorders in children who have a formal diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder. The program is offered in both individual and group formats. It uses a cognitive behavioural approach with a focus on teaching skills to manage anxiety in everyday situations, including:

- Recognising 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).

During each session, families receive information on the topic being covered and are offered the chance to engage in discussion, games and role play to learn new skills and then to use their skills in real life situations. Practice tasks are a crucial part of the program and are given following every session.

It is worth noting that the Cool Kids Autism Spectrum Program focuses on the management of anxiety only. It is not a social skills program and does not focus on emotion regulation for other types of emotions or behavioural challenges.

PROGRAM STAGES
ASSESSMENT SESSION
Each child is carefully assessed to work out whether the Cool Kids ASA Program is appropriate, whether a group program would be suitable, or whether other programs or services may be a better fit. The assessment will consist of online questionnaires and a 1.5 hour in-person interview, and will be conducted by a provisional or registered psychologist. This session focuses on anxiety. Information on other difficulties may be gathered however we do not provide assessment of issues such as ADHD, behavioural or learning problems. A verbal recommendation will be provided to you following the session.

TREATMENT PROGRAM
The Cool Kids ASA 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 boy 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 autism spectrum 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.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?
The Cool Kids ASA program is designed for children and teens who have a formal diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder. The concepts and written work in the program require a grade 2 level of literacy.

For the group program, children and teens will usually be enrolled in a mainstream classroom setting (with or without an aide) and can cope with small group work.
HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

INITIAL ASSESSMENT
The cost for the initial assessment varies depending on the qualifications of the psychologist conducting the session. The table below sets out the costs for the online assessment and 90 minute interview session.

| Assessment Session – Provisional Psychologist | $195 |
| Assessment Session – Registered Psychologist | $285 |

TREATMENT
Treatment costs vary depending on whether you participate in individual or group sessions, or a combination of the two and depending on who is providing the sessions.

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 in a calendar year.

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).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment Costs* Up Front Cost* Medicare Rebate**</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Session – Registered Psychologist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Session – Clinical Psychologist</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Session Group</td>
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* Prices are subject to change
** 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.

Alternatively individual sessions or the group program may be funded via the NDIS if identified in your child’s NDIS plan.

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 ASA program.

WHAT SHOULD I DO NEXT?
If you would like your child to take part in the program please complete the registration form available on our website.

If you have any further questions, please contact the Centre for Emotional Health Clinic on (02) 9850 8711.