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 to better manage anxiety. In this research study, we will compare our current Cool Kids to a new version of Cool Kids that is specifically developed to target social anxiety.

**ABOUT THE CENTRE FOR EMOTIONAL HEALTH**

The Centre for Emotional Health (CEHC) is a research and training clinic aimed at furthering our understanding of child & adult emotional disorders and improving methods of treatment. The clinic is part of the Centre for Emotional Health, Macquarie University. Families who seek help at the CEHC will receive state of the art assessment and treatment based on internationally recognised research, much of which has been conducted by our team over the past 20 years.

*By seeking services from a research and training clinic, there is an expectation that families will participate in various research activities related to developing better assessment and treatment methods, and better understanding the causes of anxiety and related disorders.*

**WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY?**

Cool Kids is a 10 session 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 purpose of the current study is to evaluate the effects of two slightly different versions of Cool Kids specifically for young people who experience social anxiety (extreme shyness).

**WHO IS THE COOL KIDS SOCIAL PROGRAM DESIGNED FOR?**

The Cool Kids Social research program is suitable for children:

- Who are 7-17 years old, and
- Where social anxiety is the main problem your child is experiencing and you are willing to work primarily on their social anxiety
- Anxiety is significantly affecting his or her day-to-day life.

The Cool Kids Social program is *not* suitable for your child if he or she:

- Is significantly below grade for literacy and is not in mainstream class placement.
- Has Autism or a related disorder (a separate Cool Kids program is available for children who have an Autism Spectrum or Related Disorder).
- Has recently started or has changed the dose of psychological medication (in the past 2 months), or plans to change medication while completing treatment
- Is considered at-risk due to abuse or neglect, reports suicidal risk, is self harming or has been school refusing for a significant length of time.

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 appropriate or whether other programs or services may better meet their needs.

**WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THE COOL KIDS SOCIAL PROGRAM?**

- Treatment will focus on shyness and building social confidence.
- Cool Kids Social is a research treatment study, so we are able to offer access to the Cool Kids treatment program for reduced costs.
- Participating in research will help us understand social anxiety better, and the best ways to treat it.
WHAT DOES THE STUDY INVOLVE?

- An initial assessment to determine if our program is likely to be suitable for your child,
- If the assessing clinician recommends our research program, participation involves coming to the CEHC for 10 sessions (12 weeks) to see a therapist, and
- Progress assessments, which happen during treatment, immediately after, and 6 months after treatment.

WHAT DO THE ASSESSMENTS INVOLVE?

Clinical assessments are conducted before your family commences treatment as well as after treatment. All assessments involve you and your child being interviewed in person by a therapist and completing tasks and questionnaires about thoughts, feelings and behaviours.

- The purpose of the initial assessment is to determine if our program is suitable for your child. These assessments are comprehensive and typically take 3 – 4 hours. After the initial assessment, if you decide that you do not want to proceed with treatment you will have 6 months to take up the offer, after which time a reassessment would be needed to ensure that we have current information on your child. If we believe, after assessment, that our research program is not suitable for your child, you will be provided with other options that would best suit your needs.
- Brief progress assessments take place during treatment, immediately after treatment, and 6 months after treatment. The purpose of the progress assessment is to determine whether your child has improved. You will receive reimbursements of up to $250 of the cost on completion of after-treatment (multiple) assessments.

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 slightly different versions of the Cool Kids Program. Both versions use the current Cool Kids cognitive behavioural approach to treat social anxiety (i.e., skills based treatment). One version has been slightly modified to see if it might be more effective than the other.

The Cool Kids Program involves completing 10, 50 minute sessions over a 12-week period. The program uses a cognitive behavioural approach, that is, it teaches specific strategies for anxiety management including thinking more realistically and gradual exposure to anxiety provoking situations. Your child will attend sessions with a therapist and will be taught practical skills to manage anxiety and build confidence. Parents will attend all or some sessions with their child, depending on the child’s age.

WHO DECIDES WHICH TREATMENT WE RECEIVE?

The treatment you are allocated to is decided randomly, like drawing names out of a hat. You will not be aware of which condition your child has been allocated to. If you would like to know, you can find out the condition after the study is completed. The decision as to which therapist you will have is also decided randomly.

WHO WILL BE THE THERAPIST?

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

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

An initial clinical assessment would typically cost $390. However, in return for your participation in our research and training activities we offer a discounted cost of $180. Treatment as part of this research program is subsidised by government funding. Because of this government support, the Cool Kids Social treatment program costs only $550 (covering 10 sessions).

In addition, up to $250 of the cost will be reimbursed on completion of after-treatment (multiple) assessments.

The Cool Kids Social study is funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia.

WHAT DO I DO NOW?

If you would like to be a part of the Cool Kids Social treatment study or require further information please contact our friendly team at ehc.admin@mq.edu.au, or on (02) 9850 8711. Or complete the online intake, which can be found [here](here).

"The Cool Kids Social program will teach you and your child the skills you need to manage anxiety and build confidence."