

Cool Kids FAQs

Who is this program for?

This program is designed for children (ages 7 to 12) who struggle with anxiety. Parents also attend each session, and play an important role in coaching their child in implementing program skills.

What is the *Cool Kids* program?

Cool Kids is a structured 10-session program run over a minimum of 10 weeks that teaches children (ages 7-17 years) and their parents how to better manage a child's anxiety. The program involves both children and their parents. *Cool Kids* is based on cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), with a focus on teaching practical skills for increasing brave behaviour, social skills, and parenting strategies.

What is cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) and how does it work?

Cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) focuses on discovering unhelpful thoughts and behaviours that encourage anxiety and then learning healthier skills and habits that are designed to reduce fears and worries. CBT is described as an active, solution-focused therapy and involves learning new skills, practicing those skills in-session and at home before applying them to real life situations to create lasting change. By using the CBT approach, the *Cool Kids* program will focus on understanding and addressing the thoughts and behaviours that are contributing to or maintaining your child's anxiety, while also teaching children and parents how to combat fears.

What topics does the program cover?

- Learning about feelings and anxiety;
- Learning to think more realistically;
- Parenting an anxious child;
- Fighting fear by facing fear (stepladders);
- Learning other coping skills such as building social confidence or learning to solve problems; and,
- How to maintain progress after the program ends.

How long will the program take and when will it run?

The program consists of 10 group sessions across a minimum of a 10-week period, held at the same time each week. Each session runs for 90 minutes. For the **Winter 2023** offering, the program will be held on Tuesday evenings (6:30 – 8:00 pm SK time). All meetings will occur via videoconferencing (link to be sent to you upon registration). The first intake is scheduled for February 28, 2023 with additional intakes planned after that point.

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Who attends the group?

Parents and their child attend the group simultaneously. The parent group will be facilitated by one therapist, while the child group will be facilitated by a second therapist.

In order for both parents and their child to attend the group, each person must have access to their own device for joining the meeting.

Wherever possible and applicable, we recommend that all parents involved in the day-to-day care of the child attend the group. If this is not possible, we would suggest that the same parent attends each session (rather than alternating parents). This allows a parent to build on knowledge learned in previous sessions and we would encourage the attending parent to include the non-attending parent in the program by updating them on session content learned and involve them in tasks being practiced each week at home.

Who will be running the groups?

The groups will be facilitated by staff from Child and Youth Mental Health Services. All staff have training and experience in the provision of services to children between the ages of 2 – 18, and are accredited providers of the *Cool Kids* program

How much does the group cost?

The cost to attend the group is \$30. This cost goes towards subsidizing the cost of the manuals, which are a requirement for group participation. Each child and parent will receive a manual to use during the program, and to keep after the program ends as a resource to continue to aid you in implementing the skills taught. If finances are an issue, please speak to one of the facilitators prior to registering for this group.

What if I need help with issues beyond this topic?

Child and Youth Mental Health offers tailored one-on-one treatment for children and adults for anxiety and related disorders. This involves working with a clinician to create a treatment plan to address your specific current concerns. If additional concerns are indicated during the course of this group, please speak with one of your facilitators about additional treatment options and timelines. It is expected that families engage in practicing the skills taught in the *Cool Kids* program prior to seeking out further individual services through our programs.

Who do I contact if I have more questions?

Please contact the facilitators at coolkids@saskhealthauthority.ca