Text only version of website

**Page 1 MY-CATS**

**Aims of the study**

Our aim is to test out new ways of identifying and supporting children who might benefit from help to build confidence and reduce problems with anxiety, now and in the future. We are looking for mainstream primary schools with at least two classes in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 to work with us on this project in the summer term.

**Who we are**MY-CATS is a research project funded by the Kavli Trust and we are a team of researchers at the University of Oxford.

**Page 2 Background**

It is normal for children to feel scared, worried or anxious sometimes. However, for some children, fears, worries and anxiety can start to interfere with their day-to-day lives. Children who experience significant problems with anxiety are more likely than their peers to experience mental health problems and impaired quality of life in adulthood. Helping children to build confidence from a young age could help them to have fewer problems with fears and worries in the future.

We know that families often find it helpful to learn skills and strategies that they can use to help reduce children’s problems with anxiety, now and in the future. But we know less about how best to offer support in a way that is most helpful and readily available for families with young children.

In MY-CATS, we want to find the best way to teach skills and strategies that families can use to help build young children’s confidence and minimise problems with anxiety. We will be working with **at least 60 schools** in England and inviting parents and carers of children in **reception, year 1** and **year 2** classes to take part. We will use questionnaires to identify families who may be most likely to benefit from support, and offer some of these families OSI straight away, and others a written version of the support programme later on in the project.

**Page 3 Meet the team**

Cathy Creswell – Principal Investigator

Tessa Reardon – Research Lead

Anna Placzeck – Trial Manager

Emily Davey – Research Assistant

Natascha Niekamp – Research Assistant

Gemma Halliday – Clinical Psychologist

Ruth Potts – Wellbeing Practitioner

Tamatha Weisser – Wellbeing Practitioner

Lindsey Martineau – Wellbeing Practitioner

**Page 4 Information for schools**

MY-CATS information booklet for schools and school staff to download as a pdf.

A video on how MY-CATS will work in schools.

**Page 5 Information for parents and carers**

MY-CATS information booklet for parents and carers to download as a pdf.

A video about MY-CATS information for parents.

**Page 6 Privacy notices**

MY-CATS privacy notice for schools and school staff to download as a pdf.

MY-CATS privacy notice for parents and carers to download as a pdf.

**Page 7 MY-CATS FAQs**

Frequently asked questions

Here you’ll find some common questions about the MY-CATS project. Please do contact us if you have any further questions or would like to have more information.

**What is the purpose of the MY-CATS research project?**

Please see the background information on MY-CATS here.

**How long does it take to get the information that I need in order to better understand what MY-CATS is about?**

The parent video takes about 13 minutes to watch or you can read the parent information booklet which will take about 10 minutes to read. The school video for school staff takes about 5 minutes to watch and it might take you 10 minutes to read the information booklet for schools and school staff.

**How long is the MY-CATS project?**

Families will be involved in the project for about a year. Parents/carers will be asked to complete some short screening questionnaires. Where families are eligible and agree to take part in the trial, parents/carers will be asked to complete some more questionnaires before the trial starts, and then again after 6 weeks, 12 weeks and 12 months. Parents/carers will also be asked to take part in an interview at the 12-month follow-up.

**What is OSI?**

You can learn more about OSI here.

OSI is the Online Support and Intervention clinician-supported platform that is used for the MY-CATS study. In OSI, parents support their child with fears and worries, with help from a wellbeing practitioner. We have found that it can be very useful to provide parents with evidence-based tools that they can then apply to help their children. Parents are able to learn and teach their children skills based on cognitive behavioural treatment and apply those in day-to-day life. Because the programme is delivered remotely, parents can complete the sessions flexibly in their own time. In this project, we have adapted OSI for parents of children aged 4 to 7 who may benefit from support to help minimise problems with anxiety now, and in the future.

OSI involves 7 weekly online sessions and 7 weekly telephone calls.

**What are the two ‘arms’ or groups in the MY-CATS trial?**

Schools will be randomly allocated to one of two groups: online and telephone support for parents/carers or usual school practice. This means all participating families in your child’s school and class will be allocated to the same group. Families in the online and telephone support group will be offered the parent-led support programme involving 7 weekly modules straight away. Families in the usual school practice group will continue to receive any support that they are currently receiving from their school, and will also be offered pdf versions of the parent-led support programme at the end of the trial. We have good reason to think that most families who complete the programme will benefit, but this trial will help us to find out about how many families benefit from receiving support straight away.

**Can my child take part?**

We are inviting all families in participating Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes to take part in the initial assessment. This will involve parents/cares completing short questionnaires, which include questions about your child’s fears and worries and shyness, and anxiety you might experience yourself. The research team will then let you know whether or not responses to these questionnaires indicate your family are eligible for the trial. We will then invite eligible families to take part in the trial.

**Who is conducting the research?**

We are a team of researchers from the University of Oxford. The project is led by Professor Cathy Creswell. The project is funded by the Kavli Trust.

**Will my data be kept safe?**

Yes. All information we collect will be kept secure and in confidence. For more information about how we keep your information safe, please see our Privacy Notice.

**I don’t think my child has many fears and worries. Should I still take part?**

If you don’t think that your child is experiencing problems with fears and worries at the moment, we would still like to invite you to take part in the initial questionnaires. This gives you the chance to investigate more thoroughly whether your child may benefit from support. Our questionnaires will give you a good idea about what it is that we are looking out for. You will then receive feedback of whether the results of the questionnaires make you and your child eligible for the trial.

**I don’t want my child to take part – how do I opt-out?**

The participation in MY-CATS is of course absolutely optional. If you don’t want to take part, you can simply choose to not fill in any consent forms or questionnaires. If you have started filling in your details, you can still opt out by letting your school know or by contacting us directly. You can decide at any point in the study that you no longer want to take part and you can let the team know.

**What if my child changes schools during the MY-CATS project?**

You can continue to participate. Once you have consented and provided your contact information, we communicate directly with you and not with your school. If your child moves school or finishes infant school during the project, we continue as planned and you will still receive the support (either via online and telephone support or pdf versions) and be asked to complete the various questionnaires and the interview at the end of the trial. It would be great if you could inform us if your child moves school.

**I have more than one child. Can I apply the programme to all of my children?**

If you have more than one child in the participating classes you can complete the screening questionnaires for each child. However, only one child in your family can take part in the trial. If both/all children in your family are eligible, we will use the screening questionnaire responses to decide which child may be most likely to benefit, and invite that child. Whilst the support and questionnaires are only targeted at one child, you can use the skills and strategies that you will learn (either via OSI or the pdf versions) with all of your children.

**What devices do I need to have access to in order to participate? Can I complete the whole project on my smartphone?**

If you take part, you will need access to the internet to complete online questionnaires. It might be easier to complete longer sets of questionnaires on a laptop, computer or tablet, rather than a smartphone.

If you are offered the online and telephone support, you will also need access to the internet to use the online programme. The questionnaires and online support programme are accessed through a web-browser. There is no app available for this at the moment, but it is possible to access the OSI website through a browser on your smartphone.

The optional children’s game that comes with the OSI system is available as an app. If you do not have regular access to the internet and/or a device at home, with your permission, we would talk to your child’s school about how they may be able to help with this.

**Do I need to attend virtual live events in order to be able to take part?**

There are no obligatory virtual or in person live sessions that you need to attend. Your school might offer a virtual live information session about the MY-CATS project, but we understand that this might not suit all parents. We are keen to work with you and your school to find the best ways to inform you about the programme and answer your questions.

The online and telephone support programme involves working through online modules in your own time, and weekly telephone calls with one of our wellbeing practitioners. There are no video calls involved in OSI.

**Page 8 Accessibility**

To help with the accessibility of the MY-CATS website, we have kept our text format and colouring simple, as well as trying to keep paragraphs short and easy to read. For those using a screen reader or anyone with Irlens, we have provided a downloadable text only version of the website below.

Text version of website to download as a pdf.

**Page 9 Contact us**

Email: mycats@psych.ox.ac.uk

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