

iCATS-i2i Team

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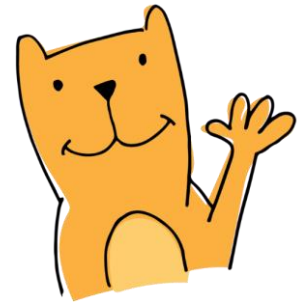
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identifying Child Anxiety Through Schools
identification to intervention



INFORMATION SHEET FOR HEADTEACHERS AND SCHOOL STAFF

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NIHR | National Institute for
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An invitation to your school

We would like to invite your school to take part in a research project called **iCATS-i2i**.

What is iCATS-i2i?

iCATS-i2i – ‘identifying Child Anxiety Through Schools – identification to intervention’ – is a research project funded by the National Institute of Health and Care Research (NIHR). We have worked with parents/carers, children and school staff to develop a new way of identifying and supporting children with anxiety problems through primary schools. In this research project we are comparing this new approach to identification and intervention to existing, usual school practice.

Why has your school been chosen?

We are inviting mainstream primary and junior schools in England to take part. We are looking for schools with **at least two classes** of Year 4 pupils. Small schools with only one Year 4 class or fewer than 40 Year 4 pupils, and schools with current “Mental Health Support Teams” (*as part of the DfE/NHS England initiative*) will not be able to take part.

We are hoping about 80 schools across England will take part in the research.

School iCATS-i2i Leads

We will ask you to nominate **two members of school staff who can act as ‘iCATS-i2i Leads’** within the school, and be the primary point of contact for the research team when liaising with the school.

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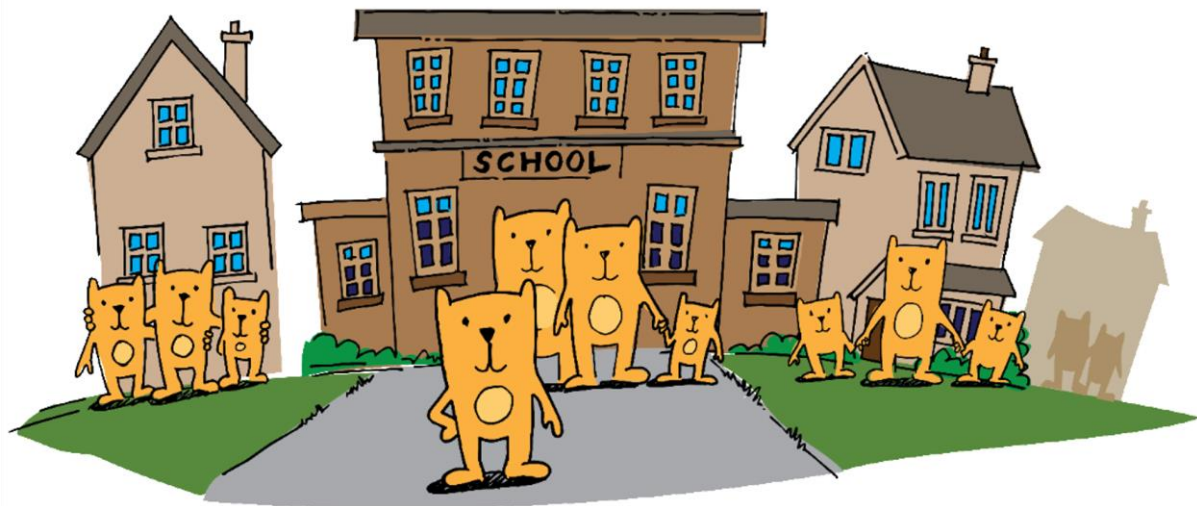
Email: icats@psych.ox.ac.uk

Why are we doing iCATS-i2i?

Anxiety problems are common in children. Fears, worries, and anxiety are a normal part of childhood, but for some children anxiety has a negative impact on their day-to-day lives. These children may benefit from professional support or intervention. But it can be hard to identify anxiety problems in children and make judgements about whether a child may benefit from support or not. And where anxiety problems are identified, families often face difficulties knowing where and how to access effective support.

We have developed a new way of identifying and supporting children with anxiety problems to help make it easier for families to access support by: 1) using questionnaires to identify children with anxiety problems, 2) giving feedback to parents/carers, and 3) where a child is experiencing difficulties with anxiety, offering parents/carers a brief online intervention with telephone support from a therapist.

We now want to test this new approach and find out if it brings benefits for children, families, and schools beyond existing, usual practice. We will compare outcomes for children in schools that do and do not receive this new approach to identifying and supporting children with anxiety problems, and we will assess whether this new approach is good value for money.



What will we be doing and how will your school be involved?

1. SCHOOL CONSENT AND CLASS SELECTION

- We will ask the school headteacher if they agree to your school participating in the research project. If the headteacher agrees, we will ask them to complete a school consent form electronically or on paper.
- We will ask the school iCATS-i2i Leads to let us know the **number of children** enrolled in each Year 4 class. ***If your school has more than three Year 4 classes, we will randomly select three Year 4 classes to take part in the project.***

2. INFORMATION FOR SCHOOL STAFF AND CHILDREN

- Researchers will run an **information session** (online or at school) for staff, and an 'iCATS-i2i Assembly' for children (or staff can use the materials to run the sessions themselves if they prefer).
- We will also ask you to distribute this information booklet and a video version of this information to all school staff (including Year 4 class teachers and support staff) to access in their own time.

3. INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/CARERS, PARENT OPT-OUT, INITIAL PARENT QUESTIONNAIRES

- We will ask the iCATS-i2i Leads to distribute information about the project, opt-out forms, and initial parent questionnaires to **all parents/carers of Year 4 children in participating classes**.
- We will provide paper packs and electronic versions of these materials for staff to distribute via email, SMS and to include on your school website and newsletter.
We will also run an information session for parents/carers (online or at school) and provide a video version of the information for parents/carers to access in their own time.

Parent opt-out

Parents/carers can choose to opt their child out of the research. If they wish to do this, we ask them to return opt-out forms to school within an agreed timeframe (approximately 1-2 weeks). We will ask iCATS-i2i Leads to keep returned opt-out forms safe and to keep a record of children whose parents opt-out.

Parent questionnaires

Initially parents/carers will be asked to provide their contact details and some background information about their family, and to complete a short questionnaire about their child's anxiety (either on paper or online).

We will then ask parents/carers to complete additional questionnaires about their child's health, feelings, and behaviours, and about their child's use of services and their own health. We will also provide parents with a diary to keep a record of any services or support their child receives during the project. Parents/carers can complete these additional questionnaires online or request a paper copy. We will ask iCATS-i2i Leads to keep any returned paper questionnaires safe until we collect them.

We are keen for as many families as possible to take part – including children who have problems with anxiety, children who are not anxious and those in between. We also want to make sure the project information reaches all parents/carers and they have an opportunity to let us know if they do not want their child to take part. We will talk to you about other things we can do to help encourage families to get involved and also to make sure parents/carers have the opportunity to opt their child out (e.g. we will ask you to identify potential 'iCATS-i2i parent champions' in your school who could help raise awareness about the project among parents in participating classes).

Child questionnaires

- We will ask the iCATS-i2i Lead to provide us with a list of the names of all children in each participating Year 4 class (with the exception of any children where the parent/carer opted their child out). We will collect this name list in person or arrange for a courier to collect from school.
- If parents/carers do not opt-out and children agree to take part, children will be asked to complete an assent form, and questionnaires about their anxiety, health, feelings, and behaviours. Where possible, iCATS-i2i Researchers will visit your school to work with children to complete the questionnaires. **The questionnaires will take approximately 40 minutes to complete.**
We will also provide materials for an alternative activity (e.g. a colouring-in activity) for children whose parents opt-out and those who choose themselves not to take part.
- Where children cannot complete questionnaires at school, or where children choose to complete the questionnaires at home, we will provide you with the assent forms and questionnaires for children to complete at home (on paper or online). We will ask you to keep any returned paper questionnaires safe until we collect them.

Year 4 Class teacher/support staff questionnaires

- We will ask class teachers/support staff who work regularly with children to complete a short questionnaire about participating children. This should take **approximately 4-5 minutes per child** and can be done online or on paper copies.
- We will also ask class teachers/support staff to provide some demographic information about themselves (age, gender, ethnicity, role, and where applicable, number of years teaching).

Additional information collected from school staff

- We will ask the iCATS-i2i Lead to provide some demographic and learning information about participating children from the school records, and to provide children's Unique Pupil Number. Collecting the Unique Pupil Number will allow us to collect information about participating children's attendance and attainment at the end of the project from the National Pupil Database held by the Department for Education.
- We will also ask the iCATS-i2i Lead (or another nominated member of staff) to provide information on any activities related to social, emotional, and mental health delivered in the school, and to complete a log to record time staff spent on iCATS-i2i activities throughout the project.

5. SCHOOL RANDOMISATION

After parents/carers, children and teachers complete initial questionnaires, **schools will be randomly allocated to one of two options.**

A computer will determine which group your school (and therefore all families in your school) will be in. We will let the iCATS-i2i Leads and parents/carers know which group your school is randomised to.



FEEDBACK AND INTERVENTION GROUP

- Parents/carers will receive feedback on their responses to the initial questionnaire about their child's anxiety
- Parents/carers will be offered a brief online intervention with telephone support from therapists
- Participating Year 4 classes will receive a lesson on recognising and managing fears and worries
- We will provide school staff with information about managing children's fears, worries and anxiety at school
- Children and parents/carers will continue to receive any other existing support and services

More information about the feedback and intervention group is provided below and on our website:

<https://osiresearch.org.uk/icats/family-info>

USUAL SCHOOL PRACTICE GROUP

- Children and parents will continue to receive any existing support or services
- At the end of the research:
 - *families will be offered a written (PDF) version of the online intervention
 - *to say thank you, schools in the usual school practice group will be offered £1000

6. 6 MONTH, 1 YEAR AND 2 YEAR FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRES

- In both groups, we will ask all parents/carers and children and class teachers to complete follow-up questionnaires 6 months, 1 year, and 2 years later. Getting lots of complete follow-up questionnaires in both groups is really important for the research to help us to understand how things change for families over time.
- These questionnaires will be similar to the initial questionnaires. We will ask the school iCATS-i2i Leads to help distribute the follow-up questionnaires, and where possible researchers will make arrangements to visit school to work with children to complete the child questionnaires.
- At each follow-up, we will ask participating children's current class teacher/support staff to complete the teacher questionnaires.
- At each follow-up, we will also ask school staff to provide information about participating children from the school records again, information on any activities related to social, emotional, and mental health delivered in the school, and to keep a record of time spent on iCATS-i2i activities.

7. IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

In some schools, we will invite parents/carers and children in participating Year 4 classes, school staff and others involved in the school (e.g. governors, mental health service providers working in the school) to take part in a follow-up interview. These interviews will help to collect detailed information on individual's experiences of the project, completing questionnaires, and where applicable experiences of receiving feedback on initial questionnaire responses and the intervention.

We may ask iCATS-i2i Leads to help distribute information about these interviews to parents/carers and staff in your school. If we organise one-to-one interviews with parents/carers, children, staff or others in your school, we will talk to you about arranging convenient times to run these at school, if possible, or by telephone or video call. Each interview will last about an hour and we will audio-record the interview to make sure we capture all of the discussion. We expect to conduct up to 50 interviews in total, including participants from a range of different schools.

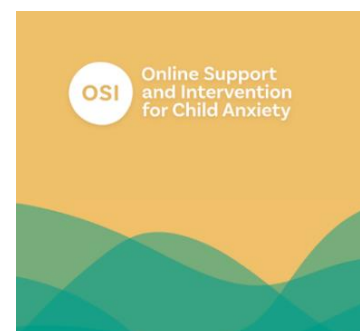
More information about the 'feedback and intervention' group

Feedback on initial questionnaire responses

- Where parents/carers completed the initial questionnaire about their child's anxiety, we will provide them with written feedback on their responses.
- Where parent/carer questionnaire responses indicate their child may be experiencing difficulties with anxiety, we will arrange a follow-up phone call with the parent/carer to discuss their responses and offer them the brief online intervention with telephone support from a therapist
- **With parental consent, we will provide the iCATS-i2i Leads with a list of children's names where parent/carer questionnaire responses indicated the child is experiencing problems with anxiety.**
- We will also make the intervention available for all parents/carers of participating children, regardless of responses to initial questionnaires. We will ask for the iCATS-i2i Leads to help distribute information about the intervention to all parents/carers of Year 4 children in participating classes.

The intervention programme

Online Support and Intervention for Child Anxiety (**OSI**) is an online programme for parents/carers. OSI provides parents/carers with strategies and activities to help them to support their child with anxiety-related difficulties.



What does OSI involve?

- **7 weekly online modules.** Each module will take parents/carers about 20-30 minutes to work through.
- **7 weekly short telephone calls** with a Wellbeing Practitioner for parents/carers to discuss each module and ask any questions.
- A **follow-up module and phone call** about a month later.

OSI does not replace any help and/or support the family is receiving.

Even if anxiety is not a particular problem, families have told us that they find the strategies helpful to build independence and manage everyday fears and worries, now and in the future.

OSI was developed with parents, children and practitioners. It is based on a successful programme and previous research has shown that 75% of children overcome their main anxiety problem within 6 months of finishing this programme. So we have good reason to think many families will benefit from OSI.

Lesson for participating Year 4 classes

We will also provide a lesson on recognising and managing anxiety for children in participating Year 4 classes. We will also offer to provide the same lesson for any Year 4 classes that are not participating in the research. If researchers are unable to visit schools, we can provide staff with the materials to deliver the lesson themselves.

Information for school staff

We will provide school staff with more information about the skills and strategies OSI teaches parents, and how these can be applied in school settings.

Do your school and school staff have to take part?

No, your school and school staff do not have to take part. If your school does decide to take part, the headteacher will be asked to sign a consent form to agree to the school taking part. If the headteacher later changes their mind, they are free to withdraw your school's involvement at any time without having to give a reason. School staff who agree to complete questionnaires about participating children and/or take part in an interview will also be free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason. They will be able to choose to withdraw some or all of the data they provide on themselves and/or participating children,

but if they want to do this, they will need to let the iCATS-i2i team know before the end of the project.

What are the possible advantages and disadvantages of taking part?

Possible advantages:

- Your school will be part of a high profile research project to help improve access to effective support for children who experience problems with anxiety.
- Parents/carers, children and school staff in other similar research projects have told us that they find completing the questionnaires helpful. The questions can provide an opportunity to think about and reflect on a child's anxiety and mental health which some families and school staff find useful.
- Once the project is complete, we will provide you with a project report. The report will show how your school compares to other schools on questionnaire responses. You will be free to use and share this report as you wish, e.g. to help inform school-wide mental health policy and practice, to share with OFSTED. We will also provide schools with information on resources available for families and school staff to support children with anxiety problems. *Nb: We will not share your individual school data with other schools.*
- After the initial questionnaires are complete in at least 25-30 schools, we can also provide you with a report that shows how your school compares to other schools on the initial questionnaire responses. If you would like us to prepare this report for your school, just let us know.
- If your school is randomly allocated to the 'feedback and intervention' group, parents/carers will receive feedback on their initial questionnaire responses and will be offered a brief intervention to help equip families with skills and strategies to use to reduce a child's problems with anxiety. We will also provide staff with more information about the skills and strategies OSI teaches families. We have good reason to believe many families will benefit from this intervention.
- If your school is randomly allocated to the 'usual school practice' group, at the end of the project, families and schools will be offered written versions of the intervention that includes the same content as the online intervention and teaches the same skills and strategies for families to use to reduce a child's problems with anxiety.

Possible disadvantages:

Children, parents/carers, and school staff will need to spend some time completing questionnaires, and school staff may need to spend some time discussing the project with parents/carers. The iCATS-i2i School Leads will also need to spend some time helping the

researchers to co-ordinate the various activities, and other school staff (e.g. admin staff) may need to help with providing information about participating children from the school records. Some parents/carers, children, and school staff may also spend some time taking part in an interview. We will talk to you about how to minimise any inconvenience for staff and families.

We work with families to try to make sure the questions we ask on questionnaires, in interviews, and as part of the intervention are as acceptable as possible. But some of the questions we ask children and parents, and areas that are addressed in the intervention, may involve discussing thoughts and feelings that may be upsetting. It is also possible that we may identify children who are experiencing mental health difficulties for whom a brief anxiety intervention may not be suitable. We will provide these families with information about self-help resources and signposting to access services and support.

To say thank you, we will offer:

- Families a **£10 gift voucher** after completing each set of child and parent/carer questionnaires (up to a value of £40 in total for initial and all follow-up questionnaires)
- Class teachers **£100** after completing a set of questionnaires for all participating children in their class
- Schools **£100** after completing forms and facilitating arrangements for distributing and collecting questionnaires at each time point (up to a value of £400)
- **Schools allocated to the 'usual school practice' group an additional £1000 after the 2 year follow-up is complete**
- Each participant who takes part in an interview a **£10 gift voucher**

What happens to the information we collect?

- All information we collect in this research about your school, school staff, children, and parents/carers will be kept secure and in confidence. We have attached a Privacy Notice that provides more detailed information about how we keep information about participants safe.
- All participants and schools will be assigned unique IDs that do not include participant or school names. We will use these IDs to label all information we collect about participants and schools. We will store a document that links the IDs to participants and schools separately from all other research data.
- Audio-recording will be stored temporarily on audio-recorders, and once transferred to a secure server, will be permanently deleted from recording devices. Audio-recordings of interviews will be transcribed, and any information that could identify schools or participants will be removed. We will use an external transcriber

who has been approved to work with the University of Oxford and has signed a confidentiality agreement.

- Data collected from parents/carers and school staff online will use a secure website, and data will be held on a secure server. Information collected on paper will temporarily be stored in locked filing cabinets at the University of Oxford, and destroyed once transferred to a secure server.
- We will not share information we collect from parents/carers, children, or school staff with you or anyone else, unless we have parent/carer permission. The only circumstances where we would share information without permission is if we thought that a child or someone else was at serious risk of harm. In these circumstances, we would only share information essential to ensure safety and any information sharing would be in accordance with the iCATS-i2i risk and safeguarding protocol. We will ask you to let us know who the Designated Safeguarding Lead is in your school, and where possible we will contact them in the first instance about any risk or safety concerns and information sharing. We've attached some more information about our safeguarding commitment.
- We will not routinely share copies of questionnaires that class teachers/support staff complete about participating children with parents/carers. However, if a parent/carer requested a copy of the questionnaire, we would be obliged to share this with them.
- Once the research project is finished, we may release the project data for other researchers to use, but only in a way that it is impossible for them to identify who has taken part. Any data or findings from the research that is published will not identify schools or individuals. We may include unidentifiable quotes from interviews in publications, but these will not include any information that could identify schools or individuals.

What will happen to the results of the research?

After the project is complete, we will send you a report summarising the findings from the research.

Any research publications will not identify your school or any participants. If you would like a copy of the research publication once it's available, just let us know.

What if there's a problem?

If you have a concern about any part of this project, please speak to the **iCATS-i2i** team (telephone: 01865 618175; email: icats@psych.ox.ac.uk) who will do their best to address your concern. The researcher should acknowledge your concern within 10 working days and give you an indication of how they intend to deal with it.

If you remain unhappy or wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the **Chair of the Medical Sciences Interdivisional Research Ethics Committee** at the University of Oxford who

will seek to resolve the matter as soon as possible. Email: ethics@medsci.ox.ac.uk; Address: Research Services, University of Oxford, Wellington Square, Oxford, OX1 2JD.

If you have any concerns about any member of the research team, you are free to contact the two University of Oxford safeguarding leads:

Julian Duxfield

University of Oxford Director of Human Resources

Tel: 01865 270 152

email: julian.duxfield@admin.ox.ac.uk

Catherine Paxton

Director of Student Welfare and Support Services

Tel: 01865 280 444 (direct line) or 01865 280 459

email: director.swss@admin.ox.ac.uk

Who has reviewed this research project?

This project has been reviewed by and received ethical clearance through the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee.

All researchers involved in the project have been through the enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checking process and received approval by the University of Oxford for working with children.

Please also be aware that current NHS and government guidance on social distancing and use of PPE will be followed at each school visit to protect both participants and researchers from COVID-19 infection/transmission.

Thank you for reading this information.

If you are interested in taking part and would like to talk to the iCATS-i2i team to find out more, please get in touch on 01865 618175 or icats@psych.ox.ac.uk.

