

## How do I know if my child has excessive worries, fears or shyness?

Some worry, fear and inhibition (shyness) can be a part of normal development in children. However, research shows that excessive worries, fears or shyness in children can sometimes lead to more serious problems in later life. Your child may be experiencing difficulties beyond what is healthy if you notice any of the following:

- Clinging, crying and/or tantrums when you separate
- Excessive shyness, avoiding social situations
- Constant worry
- Avoiding situations or places because of fears
- Complaints of frequent stomach aches or headaches that do not have another medical explanation
- Experiencing sudden and frequent panic attacks

## Referral Process

To be referred to the “Families Worrying Less Together” program, please call 905-527-5092 ext. 3555 or email [FWLT@hwdsb.on.ca](mailto:FWLT@hwdsb.on.ca)

## What if my child is not in grades 3 – 6?

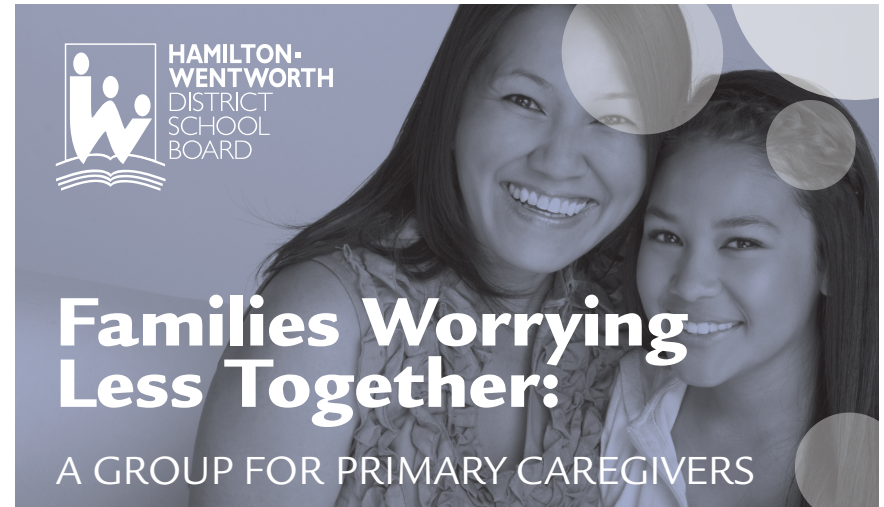
Social Work support is available for HWDSB students of any age who are having difficulties with anxiety. Please speak with your child’s Principal or Learning Resource Teacher if this is a concern. Anxiety treatment groups are also available for primary caregivers of JK – Gr. 2 students, and directly with students in grades 7 – 12.

### **For more information visit:**

What is Cognitive Behavioural Therapy? [www.anxietybc.com](http://www.anxietybc.com)



HAMILTON-WENTWORTH DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD  
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FAMILIES WORRYING LESS TOGETHER: A GROUP FOR CAREGIVERS

*Offered by Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board Social Work Services*

## What is the Families Worrying Less Together Program?

Families Worrying Less Together is an anxiety treatment program for primary caregivers of children in grades 3 to 6 who show signs of being shy, worried, excessively fearful or inhibited. The program uses Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Techniques and gives participants knowledge, practical skills, support and tips on how to help their child manage and overcome anxiety.

## How can the program help?

The program focuses on teaching primary caregivers how to work with their child to manage their worries and other negative emotions.

### **Participants will learn how to help their child:**

- Build self-confidence
- Manage worries and face fears

### **Participants will also:**

- Gain an increased understanding of their own reactions to their child’s behaviour
- Learn how their own worries about their child can be managed differently

## What is Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)?

CBT is an evidence-based treatment approach that focuses on the way people think (“cognitive”) and act (“behavioural”). The idea behind CBT is that our thoughts about a situation affect how we feel, (emotionally and physically) and how we behave in that situation.

Through the Families Worrying Less Together program, participants are able to learn how unhelpful thoughts and behaviours can encourage anxiety. Then they learn healthier skills and habits to reduce fears. Participants can then help their child in learning these skills.



## Who are the Program Facilitators?

Registered Social Workers, who are employed by Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, facilitate the program’s group sessions, applying their expertise in school-based mental health support for children.



## How long is the program and when is it offered?

The program is eight group sessions in length and runs over 12 weeks. Each group session is two hours in length. The day, time and location will be tailored to meet the needs of the group participants. The program runs in HWDSB schools, or HWDSB’s Education Centre.

## Who attends the Families Worrying Less Together Program?

Any primary caregiver involved in the day-to-day care of the child may attend the program. If both caregivers cannot attend, the same caregiver should attend each session to maintain consistency. Children do not attend the program. The program will be limited to four to six families.

## What topics does the program cover?

- Understanding anxiety in children
- Causes and risk factors for childhood anxiety
- Helpful and unhelpful ways of responding to anxiety in children
- Skills and strategies to help your child build brave behaviours, face fears and reduce worries
- Strengthening your child’s social skills that are impacted by fears and worries
- Dealing with setbacks and difficulties
- How to maintain progress after the program ends