



SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

As we enter the month of December and the holiday season, I want to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude for the dedication and partnership you demonstrate every day. The success of our students is a true reflection of the strength of our entire learning community.

Thank You for Your Calendar Feedback

Thank you to everyone who took the time to provide thoughtful feedback on our recent survey regarding the proposed 2026-2027 school calendar. Your engagement in this process is invaluable. As a collaborative community, we

appreciate your input as we work to make decisions that best serve the needs of all our students and families. Based on your feedback and conversations with our calendar committee, we will be proposing a calendar that moves our weekly staff PD from a late start on Wednesday to a 90-minuter early out on Friday. In addition, we will be having school with students on the Monday and Tuesday of the week of Thanksgiving and have moved those two staff PD days to days following the end of a quarter/semester during the year. Our board has scheduled a public hearing at

our December 8th board meeting prior to them approving the 2026-2027 school calendar.

Focusing on the Future: Our Profile of a Graduate Skills

This school year, our staff has been diligently working to implement our Strategic Priorities by intentionally focusing on our Profile of a Graduate (POG) skills. The POG defines the essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions—such as critical thinking, collaboration, and communication—that every Winterset student should possess upon graduation to be successful in college, career, and life. Our dedicated educators have been engaged in professional development to learn how to seamlessly weave these high-demand skills into every classroom and subject area. This intentional focus ensures that we are delivering on our promise to provide meaningful, real-world

learning experiences and truly preparing all our students for their future endeavors.

Be Prepared: Winter Weather Communication



As a lifelong Iowan, I know the weather can change quickly, and we must be prepared for the inevitable cold and snow. The safety of our students and staff is always our top priority.

I want to revisit the ways we communicate any school delay, early dismissal, or closure due to inclement weather:

District App and Social Media

When a schedule change is necessary, notifications are sent out immediately via our district app. This information is dispersed across multiple

December Monthly Highlights

12/3: High School Conferences (3:30-7:30)

12/23: 2-Hour Early Dismissal

12/24-1/2: Winter Break

1/5: Classes Resume

platforms: email, text, and posts to all of the district's social media accounts.

I strongly encourage every family to download the Winterset CSD district app and ensure you have push notifications enabled. This will allow you to receive the notification the moment it is posted.

Local News Affiliates

We also share closure and delay information with the following local news affiliates: KCCI, WOI, and WHO.

We sincerely hope that we still have some time before these measures are needed, but being prepared ensures we can communicate effectively and keep

everyone safe. This process is part of our commitment to effective communication and responsibility to our community—qualities we model as part of our Core Values and encourage in our students.

Thank you for your cooperation as we look toward the winter months.

We are committed to providing a well-rounded educational experience and believe that being prepared is a key part of that commitment.

Wishing you all a wonderful and restful holiday season.

Yours in Service,

Justin M. Gross

Superintendent

Term 1 Renaissance Awards



Freshman- McKinley Kaysen

Sophomore- Veda Hupton

Junior- Jenna Peacock

Senior- Jack Keller

Presented by USB Bank

President- Jeff Nolan

The National Honor Society Induction Ceremony for new members will be 12-15-25 in the high school auditorium at 7 PM.

Madison County Food Resources

Please call the number listed (if available) for each pantry to ensure the dates, times and locations are accurate.

Community Meals

Winterset Senior Citizen Center
(Congregate Meals)
1006 N. John Wayne Drive
Winterset, IA 50273
(515) 462-1334

Earlham Community Center
(Congregate Meals)
150 E. 1st Street
Earlham, Iowa 50072
(515) 758-2590

United Methodist Church Meal
309 E Jefferson Street
Winterset, Iowa 50273
Wednesdays at 5:30pm
Open to ANYONE

Food Pantries

Earlham Food Pantry
Earlham Friends Church
115 NE 2nd Street
Earlham, Iowa 50072
(515) 758-0011
1st Wednesday of the month from
5-6p
Earlham Residents

Earlham Mobile Food Pantry
Earlham First United Methodist
Church
145 NE Sycamore
Earlham, Iowa 50072
3rd Tuesday of each month
from 5:30-7pm

I-35 Backpack Program
(641) 765-4818
rdickinson@roadrunnerpride.com
www.roadrunnerpride.org/page/roadrunner-family-supports

*Food sent home with students for
the weekend.*

I-35 School Pantry
(641) 765-4818

rdickinson@roadrunnerpride.org
www.roadrunnerpride.org/page/roadrunner-family-supports

**MATURA/Madison County
Outreach**
1774 N John Wayne Dr.
Winterset Iowa 50273
(515) 462-4704
(515) 462-5838 (fax)
madisonoutreach@maturaia.org
www.maturacommunityaction.com
Monday-Friday from 9:00am-
4:00pm
LIHEAP, Food Pantry, thrift store

**The Cupboard at New Bridge
Church**
1305 W. Jefferson
Winterset, Iowa 50273
(515) 462-1050
Open the 3rd Thursday of every
month from 4:00p-6:00p or the
following Friday from 9:00-
10:00am.
You may visit the Cupboard once a
month per household. Please enter
through the front door on the east
side of the church.

St. Joseph Catholic Church Pantry
1026 N 8th Avenue
Winterset, Iowa 50273
(515) 462-1083
Thursdays from 10am-12p or by
appointment

**Winterset First United Methodist
Church Pantry**
309 E Jefferson Street
Winterset, Iowa 50273
(515) 564-0330
1st Monday of the month from
4:30-6:30pm and the 1st Tuesday
from 9-11am
Bring bags, laundry baskets, etc.
to carry your food.

Winterset Mobile Food Pantry
Winterset First United Methodist
Church
309 East Jefferson Street,
Winterset
4th Monday of each month
from 4:30-6:30 pm

Winterset School Pantry
Winterset PAW Pantry
Winterset Middle School
706 W. School Street
Winterset, Iowa 50273
(515) 462-3010
2nd Thursday of the month from
4:30-6:00pm or by appointment
Park in the front, East parking lot
and enter through the doors by the
playground.

*Available to school families free of
charge! Please bring bags, laundry
baskets or boxes to carry your
food*

**Women, Infants and Children
(WIC)**
(515) 282-5800 (Main office)

*Call the office to make an
appointment.*

*For children 0-5 years old and
women who are pregnant,
breastfeeding or just had a baby.
This program provides nutritional
education and checks to families
to purchase baby formula, milk,
eggs, & other healthy foods*

All Kindergarten students must be up to date on their preschool shots and have received their 4 year old boosters of Dtap, Polio, MMR and Varicella.

All 7th grade (and above) students must show proof of having received a Tdap (Tetanus/Acellular Pertusis) vaccination booster AND a Meningococcal vaccination on or after 10 years of age, before the first day of school.

All 12th grade students must show proof of receiving 2 DOSES of Meningococcal vaccine; or 1 dose if first dose was received at 16 years of age or older before the first day of school.

*or signed medical certificate of exemption or religious exemption.

All Kindergarten students must have a dental screen performed between the ages of 3 and 6 years old with a dental certificate on file. All 9th grade students must have a current, within the past 12 months, dental certificate on file.

All Kindergarten and 3rd grade students must have a current, within the past 12 months, vision certificate on file.

Lunch Menus

Use the new school app for the most up to date menus each day.

Elementary Lunch Menu
Middle School Lunch Menu
JH/HS Lunch Menu

Free & Reduced-Price Meals Applications

- Log into your Parent Portal
- Click on More, then click on Meals Benefits
- Complete Free & Reduced Form, click Submit

You will receive confirmation in your Parent Portal inbox once the application is processed. Questions: Call the administration office at (515) 462-2718.

SCHOOL FEES

Attention parents: This year's school fees were due October 17th. You may pay them through your **Parent Portal**, at any of the school offices or at the administration office.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS/PHONE

When you have a change of address or phone number, please contact the school or the administration office. It is important for the school to have updated information on our students for messages and emergency situations.

STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOKS

The Winterset Student/Parent Handbooks are posted **on the district website under the Parent tab**. We have produced a district-wide handbook that aligns to board policies and current state law. The handbook includes addendums for each school, covering building specific expectations. Paper copies are available in each school's office. All students are expected to follow the policies, procedures and expectations. Please take the time to review the handbooks with your child.

2025-26 School Hours

Type of Day	Elem	Middle	Jr. High	HS
Teacher Regular Day	7:30-3:30	7:30-3:30	7:30-3:30	7:30-3:30
Student Regular Day	8:00-3:00	8:00-3:05	8:00-3:05	8:00-3:05
Building Opens for Drop-Off	7:35	7:45	7:45	7:45
Teacher Day on Wednesday	7:30-3:30	7:30-3:30	7:30-3:30	7:30-3:30
Student Day on Wednesday	9:00-3:00	9:00-3:05	9:00-3:05	9:00-3:05
Building Opens on Wednesday	8:35	8:45	8:45	8:45

BUILDING SAFETY MEASURES

In an effort to maintain a safe environment in our schools, all staff in Winterset will be wearing their staff identification badges while on any Winterset School Campus. Additionally, ALL visitors are expected to check into the office of any school building during regular business hours (7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.) each time they visit the school. Visitors will need their driver's license or state issued identification card

to check in. Our system, Raptor, checks state and national databases for individuals who are on the sex offender list. Once a visitor has been cleared, they will be issued a Visitor Badge. This must be worn at all times while in the building. Our staff will be asking people who do not have a badge to return to the office immediately. While this may be a slight inconvenience, this measure will provide better protection for our students.

NOTIFY SCHOOL OF CHANGES

To make any changes to your personal information, please go to the Infinite Campus Parent Portal. Select Demographics, Household Information, Family Member and click Update for any information you wish to update.

Once you make your changes, you will need to click "Send Update". This information will be reviewed by the administration office and will be automatically updated in Infinite Campus once approved.

You can update: address, home phone, cell phone, work phone and emergency contact.

It is very important that this information is up to date and accurate in case of an emergency with your child.

If you need assistance setting up a Parent Portal, please contact the Administration Office at 515-462-2718.

School Fees

Food Service Program:*

Breakfast	\$2.00 per meal
PK-3 Lunch	\$2.75 per meal
4-12 Lunch	\$3.00 per meal
Second Lunch	\$5.00 per meal
Student Guest (all grades)	\$5.00 per meal
Adult Lunch	\$5.00 per meal
Milk 1/2 pint	50¢ each

NOTICE: Students with no available account balance will not be allowed to charge any further meals until a deposit is received.

*Application forms for Free & Reduced meals and waiver of school fees are available online through the Parent Portal.

Textbook & Computer Fees:

Kindergarten - 6th Grade	\$40.00
7th - 12th Grade	\$75.00
Computer-Damage	\$10.00*
Computer-Lost/Stolen	\$1,000.00*

*Subject to additional charges

PAST DUE FEES MUST BE PAID

All past due student fees/lunch accounts must be paid before school starts. Past due fees are posted on **Parent Portal**.

All fees and lunch account deposits can be paid through the Parent Portal, or at the Administration Building or the school buildings. Current fees are due October 15th.

Free & Reduced-Price Meals are Available

Children need healthy meals to learn, and our schools offer healthy meals every school day. Your child(ren) may qualify for free meals or for reduced-price meals. Application forms are available on your Parent Portal. If you need assistance filling out the application or setting up the Parent Portal, please contact the Administration Office at 515-462-2718.

STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOKS

The Winterset Student/Parent Handbooks are posted **on the district website under the Parent tab**. We have produced a district-wide handbook that aligns to board policies and current state law. The handbook includes addendums for each school, covering building specific expectations. Paper copies are available in each school's office. All students are expected to follow the policies, procedures and expectations. Please take the time to review the handbooks with your child.

The Winterset FFA Chapter has had a busy fall! They kicked off October with an annual Feed the Farmers event on Friday, October 10th! We were able to partner with the following



businesses; Berry Family Seed, Fareway, Iowa Corn, and the Iowa Soybean Association. This allowed us to be able to package over 100 meals to pass out to farmers in the field. This was a great opportunity for the chapter to connect and give back to not only the community, but the farmers within it! On October 11th, the Winterset FFA Chapter held their Drive-In Movie! They had a great turnout with 25

cars and around 20 walking admittance attending both the kid and adult movies! On October 15th, 11 freshmen attended Greenhand Fire-Up in Atlantic. They joined other first year members to learn leadership/teamwork skills, communication, and employability readiness. As well as learning about the future of agriculture, FFA traditions and opportunities! The chapter wrapped up October with a memorable trip to the 98th National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana! They left on October 28th, and spent 4 days on various tours; such as Kinze Innovation Center, Crooked Creek Safari, Kentucky Toyota Factory, and the Buffalo Trace Distillery. As well as attending sessions, exploring careers at the career fair, and hearing inspirational keynote speakers, such as; A'ric Jackson; Leadership Trainer and Speaker, Brooke Rollins the US Secretary of Agriculture, and National FFA Eastern Region Vice President; Caroline Groth! Members made lasting friendships, memories, and experiences at this convention! Now that October is over we have a lot of exciting events coming up, such as a Bingo Meal on December 2nd from 5-6pm. We will be serving soup, rolls, and cinnamon rolls as a free donation dinner. As well as our annual poinsettia sales, which are now available for order and pick-up! If you would like to purchase a poinsettia please fill out the form on the Winterset FFA social media. (<https://tinyurl.com/WintersetPoinsettias>) We are excited for another great month!



In Blue and Gold,
Denali Coffman: Winterset FFA Reporter



OPERATION CHRISTMAS MEAL



We believe everyone deserves a good meal, especially during the holidays. As farmers, we're proud of the product we produce—pork is a lean and powerful protein that nourishes bodies young and old. Pork is easy to prepare, full of flavor and versatile.

Since 2011, the Deb and Jeff Hansen Foundation and Iowa Select Farms has organized Operation Christmas Meal, a hunger relief effort that supports Iowa families in need of a helping hand, especially during the holidays.

We invite all families in need to come to their nearest Operation Christmas Meal location for a free pork loin roast and recipe booklet. Watch Iowa Select Farms Facebook and website for location updates.



6 DAYS, 16 COMMUNITIES DRIVE-THRU GIVEAWAY FREE, 5-POUND PORK LOIN TO LOCAL FAMILIES IN NEED

2025 SCHEDULE

Friday, December 5th

DES MOINES 5 - 9 am Iowa State Fairgrounds, Gate 15
3000 E Grand Ave, Des Moines, IA 50137

Monday, December 8th

ROCKWELL CITY 9 - 10 am Calhoun County Expo Center - 450 High St, Rockwell City, IA 50879
ALTA 11:30 am - 12:30 pm Bureau Vista County Fairgrounds - 5000 35th Ave, Alta, IA
WEST BEND 2 - 3 pm Fire Station - 207 First St NE, West Bend, IA 50597

Wednesday, December 10th

OSAGE 9 - 11 am Mitchell County Fairgrounds - 1006 E Orchard St, Osage, IA 50458
ALLISON 12 - 1 pm Butler County Fairgrounds - 101 Talmor Dr, Allison, IA 50812
GRUNDY CENTER 2 - 3 pm Grundy County Fairgrounds - 1328 4th St, Grundy Center, IA 50638

Friday, December 12th

KEOSAUQUA 9 - 10 am Van Buren County Fairgrounds - 20475 Hwy 1, Keosauqua, IA 52563
CORYDON 12 - 1 pm Wayne County Fairgrounds - 800 2nd Ave, Corydon, IA 50600
CHARITON 2 - 3 pm Lucas County Fairgrounds - 482911 1/2 Ave Rd, Chariton, IA 50819

Tuesday, December 16th

OSCEOLA 10 am - 12 pm Clarke County Fairgrounds - 2679 W Walnut St, Osceola, IA 50711
AFTON 1 - 2 pm Union County Fairgrounds - 211 S Grace St, Afton, IA 50830
MOUNT Ayr 3 - 4 pm Ringgold County Fairgrounds - 2214 Hwy 160, Mount Ayr, IA 50654

Thursday, December 18th

EAGLE GROVE 9:30 - 10:30 am Wright County Fairgrounds - 901 SE First St, Eagle Grove, IA 50533
WINTerset CITY 11:30 am - 1:30 pm Hamilton County Fairgrounds - 1300 Main St, Winterset City, IA 51096
IOWA FALLS 3 - 3 pm Iowa Select Farms Headquarters - 811 S Oak St, Iowa Falls, IA 50626



Iowa Select Farms
5034 Grand Ridge Dr.,
West Des Moines, IA 50265

IOWASELECT.COM





Winterset Paw Pantry



***Additional
Pantry Dates!***

Thursday, November 13th

Tuesday, November 25th

Thursday, December 11th

Monday, December 22nd

4:30 p.m.- 6:00 p.m

Parking Change

Please park in the
front/east parking lot.
Enter through the doors by
the playground at 4:30.



WINTERSET HIGH

COLLEGE AND CAREER FAIR

FEBRUARY 11TH || 12:00 – 3:00 PM

ARE YOU A...

Business

College & University

Trade School

Military Branch



**JOIN US WITH THE CODE
EMAIL THE HS
COUNSELORS FOR
QUESTIONS**

Kathy Erickson: kerickson@winterset.k12.ia.us
Sydney Slagter: sslagter@winterset.k12



WHS Guidance Department

Visit the Guidance Webpage at www.winterset.k12.ia.us/Page/1552.

ICAN Senior Alert



The 26-27 FAFSA is currently open!! It is highly recommended to submit your application as early as possible because financial aid is often awarded on a first-come, first-served basis and some schools and state aid programs have their own early deadlines. FAFSA is a free form that may be completed online or with a paper form provided by the U.S. Department of Education. If you have not set up your StudentAid.gov account yet, remember you need one account for the student and one for at least one parent prior to completing the FAFSA form.

Winterset High School Conferences will be held December 3rd from 3:30-7:30pm. We are welcoming any and all seniors and their parents/guardians to join us at 6:00pm in the Auditorium while we introduce AppCentri, a new and easy-to-use platform that allows students to complete our local scholarship as well as many others in just a few minutes. For any student who has questions or needs help completing the FAFSA, the counselors will be available Dec. 3rd between 6:30- 7:30pm during conferences in the WHS cafeteria.

We will be hosting the Winterset High school College and Career this year on February 11th from 12:00 to 3:00 pm. this event will take place at Winterset High School in the Competition Gym.

We would love for you to join us on this date! Your participation would be a valuable addition to this event so we can show our students the amazing careers, colleges and military branches that are out there! Please scan the QR code and fill out the survey if you are interested in joining! You may also send us an email if you have any questions!

WINTERSET HIGH
COLLEGE AND CAREER FAIR
FEBRUARY 11TH || 12:00 - 3:00 PM

ARE YOU A...

- Business
- College & University
- Trade School
- Military Branch

JOIN US WITH THE CODE
EMAIL THE HS
COUNSELORS FOR
QUESTIONS

QR CODE

Kathy Erickson: kerickson@winterset.k12.ia.us
Sydney Slagter: sslagter@winterset.k12.ia.us

Visit the Guidance Webpage at www.winterset.k12.ia.us/Page/1552.

ACT's at WHS:

December 13th- register no later than Nov. 24th w/late fee

February 14th- register no later than Jan. 7th (Jan. 21st w/late fee)

April 11th- register no later than March 6th (March 24th w/late fee)

June 13th- register not later than May 8th (May 27th w/late fee)

Remember when creating an account, do NOT use the student's Winterset email address, as it will not accept outside emails. Please use a different email, personal email.

Students can register for the test at actstudent.org. If you would like your student to take it at the WHS, please make sure they sign up for the Paper version.

Classroom Clinic:

Classroom Clinic provides behavioral support and mental health services to students at school via telehealth. At the request of a parent, a student can receive an evaluation by a Classroom Clinic provider. Examples might include: behavioral evaluation, medication management (if needed), implementing therapy, and/or collaborating with the school regarding classroom strategies to ensure student success. If you believe this would be beneficial for your student, please contact your school counselor to get started. Here is a flyer with more information:

Classroom Clinic Parent Flyer

School Counselor Contacts:

If you would like to talk with your student's school counselor, please contact us through our email or set up an appointment using the link below:

Mrs. Erickson (Last Name A-J): kerickson@winterset.k12.ia.us (Schedule A Meeting)

Ms. Slagter (Last Name K-Z): sslagter@winterset.k12.ia.us (Schedule A Meeting)



NOVEMBER/DECEMBER ATHLETIC CALENDAR

Check for updates at raccoonriverconference.org
or call the high school at 462-3320.

HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL

DATE	TIME	LEVEL	OPPONENT	SITE
Dec 1	4:30 PM	9/JV/V-G/B	Creston	Creston
Dec 5	4:30 PM	9/JV/V-G/B	Gilbert	Winterset
Dec 9	4:30 PM	9/JV/V-G/B	B-F	Winterset
Dec 12	4:30 PM	9/JV/V-G/B	ADM	ADM
Dec 13	2/3:30/5	9/JV/V-B	Atlantic	Atlantic
Dec 16	4:30 PM	9/JV/V-G/B	North Polk	North Polk
Dec 19	4:30 PM	9/JV/V-G/B	Carroll	Winterset

JUNIOR HIGH GIRLS BASKETBALL

DATE	TIME	LEVEL	OPPONENT	SITE
Dec 2	4:15 PM	7 A/B	Bondurant-F	Winterset JH
		8 A/B	Bondurant-F	B-F JH
Dec 8	4:15 PM	7 A/B	Ballard	Ballard
		8 A/B	Ballard	WMS
Dec 11	4:15 PM	7 A/B	ADM	ADM South
		8 A/B	ADM	WMS
Dec 15	4:15 PM	7 A/B	Carlisle	Winterset JH
		8 A/B	Carlisle	Carlisle MS
Dec 16	4:15 PM	7 A/B	Norwalk	WMS
		8 A/B	Norwalk	Norwalk

JUNIOR HIGH BOYS WRESTLING

DATE	TIME	LEVEL	OPPONENT	SITE
Dec 4	4:15 PM	7/8	Meet	Norwalk
Dec 9	4:30 PM	7/8	Meet	Winterset
Dec 12	4:15 PM	7/8	Meet	Winterset
Dec 15	4:30 PM	7/8	Meet	Perry
Dec 19	4:15 PM	7/8	Meet	ADM

HIGH SCHOOL SWIMMING

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	SITE
Dec 2	5:30 pm		Newton YMCA
Dec 6	10:00 AM		Newton YMCA
Dec 11	5:30 PM		Ottumwa
Dec 13	11 AM		Grinnell
Dec 16	5:00 PM		SEP HS

HIGH SCHOOL BOYS WRESTLING

DATE	TIME	LEVEL	OPPONENT	SITE
Dec 4	5:00 PM	JV/V	ADM, Carlisle	Carlisle
Dec 6	10:00 AM	V	Tournament	Harlan
Dec 6	9:30 AM	JV	Tournament	Winterset
Dec 11	5:00 PM	JV/V	Gilbert	Gilbert
Dec 12	1:30 PM	V	Tournament	Central Decatur
Dec 15	5:00 PM	JV	Tournament	Knoxville
Dec 18	5:30 PM	JV/V	Ballard	Ballard
Dec 19	5:00 PM	JV	Tournament	Indianola
Dec 20	10:00 AM	V	Tournament	Roland-Story

HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS WRESTLING

DATE	TIME	LEVEL	OPPONENT	SITE
Dec 6	10:00 AM	V	Ames Tourney	Ames
Dec 11	5:30 PM	JV/V	Gilbert	Gilbert
Dec 12	4:30 PM	JV/V	Saydel Scramble	Saydel
Dec 13	9:00 AM	V	SE Polk Duals	SE Polk
Dec 18	5:30 PM	JV/V	Tournament	Winterset
Dec 20	10:00 AM	JV/V	ADM Girls Invite	ADM

GAME TICKETS

A new school year is upon us and with it comes a new year of athletic competition. We are looking forward to outstanding seasons in all areas.

\$8 for All High School Events & \$5 for Junior High Activity Passes for the 2025-2026 school year will need to be purchased through Bound.

SENIOR CITIZEN'S PASS

Any person age sixty-five (65) or older, is eligible to obtain a Senior Citizen Pass. This pass is good for admission to all of the school's activities except state-sponsored tournaments. To obtain this pass, stop by the High School Office, 720 Husky Drive, or call (515) 462-3320.

Senior photos and
kindergarten photos due to Mrs.
Forsyth by 12-13-25 for the yearbook.
Email them to
boomerang@winterset.k12.ia.us



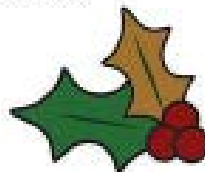
**ALABASTER
CHRISTMAS STORE**
A REDEEMER CHURCH MINISTRY

For those in the community that need a little help
providing Christmas gifts for their family.

SATURDAY DEC. 13TH 9-12 AT REDEEMER CHURCH

CURRENTLY ACCEPTING YOUR DONATIONS THAT WILL BLESS ANOTHER FAMILY THIS CHRISTMAS!

GIFT ITEMS CAN BE DROPPED OFF AT REDEEMER CHURCH
MONETARY DONATIONS AT REDEEMER CHURCH
OR THROUGH THE REDEEMER CHURCH VENMO:



REDEEMER CHURCH / 200 N. 16TH AVENUE / WINTERSET

LEGO CLUB

Children ages 8-12 welcome.

No registration required.

Held 3:30-4:30 p.m. the 3rd Thursday of the month:



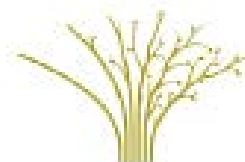
October 16, 2025

November 20, 2025

December 18, 2025

January 15, 2026

February 19, 2026



**WINTERSET
PUBLIC LIBRARY**

March 19, 2026

April 16, 2026

May 21, 2026

*Thematic builds each month and displayed
after sessions. Legos will be provided, please
do not bring your own.*

COME BUILD WITH US!

CRISP Winter Wear Program



Is your child in need of a winter coat, boots, snow pants, hat or gloves for the upcoming season? If this will be a hardship for you or your family to provide, please call Community Resources in Service to People (CRISP) at 515-462-9400. CRISP has a good selection of new and gently worn winter wear items **PLEASE CALL FOR AN APPOINTMENT BEFORE STOPPING IN** so that we may limit the number of people in the

office at one time and better meet your needs. If you are in need of assistance, but are not a current CRISP client, please contact us for information on how to access CRISP services



Christmas4Kids (CRISP) and Operation Santa Claus (MATURA) are working together to serve Madison County families.

We will provide families who sign up for our combined Holiday Program:
Toys, Clothing AND a Food Box.

If your family needs assistance this holiday season,
or you know of someone who does, please contact either of our offices.
CRISP 515-462-9400, MATURA 515-462-4704.

A poster for "Friday Flicks" with an orange background. At the top, the title "Friday Flicks" is in large, bold, black letters. Below it, the text "Friday Movies:" is followed by four dates: "October 24, 2025", "January 16, 2026", "March 27, 2026", and "May 29, 2026". To the left of the dates are illustrations of a movie clapperboard, a bucket of popcorn, and a pair of 3D glasses. To the right is a large illustration of a movie camera on a tripod. In the center, there is a logo for "WINTERSET PUBLIC LIBRARY" featuring a stylized tree. Below the logo, the text reads: "Join your friends and come watch a family friendly movie at the library starting at 1:30 p.m. on the above dates! Free popcorn included! An occasional craft to accompany the movie. Check our website for the movie to be shown." At the bottom, it says "No registration for this event."

Friday Flicks

Friday Movies:
October 24, 2025
January 16, 2026
March 27, 2026
May 29, 2026

Join your friends and come watch a family friendly movie at the library starting at 1:30 p.m. on the above dates! Free popcorn included! An occasional craft to accompany the movie. Check our website for the movie to be shown.

No registration for this event.

A poster for "Game On!" with a green background. At the top, it says "RECOMMENDED AGES 10 AND UP" and "PARTICIPANTS BEHAVIOR MUST FOLLOW LIBRARY POLICY". The title "GAME ON!" is in large, bold, black letters. Below it, the text "MONDAYS FROM 3 - 5" is in bold. Then, it lists "XBOX 360 | WII | NINTENDO SWITCH | BOARD GAMES". Below that, it says "FREE - NO REGISTRATION REQUIRED". At the bottom, there is a large illustration of a black video game controller. To the left of the controller is a logo for "WINTERSET PUBLIC LIBRARY" featuring a stylized tree. At the bottom right, the address "123 North 2nd Street, Winterset, IA" and phone number "(515)-462-1731" are listed.

RECOMMENDED AGES 10 AND UP
PARTICIPANTS BEHAVIOR MUST FOLLOW LIBRARY POLICY

GAME ON!

MONDAYS FROM 3 - 5

XBOX 360 | WII | NINTENDO SWITCH | BOARD GAMES

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WINTERSET PUBLIC LIBRARY

123 North 2nd Street, Winterset, IA
(515)-462-1731

by *Nicole Schwarz.*



(This article is part of the **Positive Parenting FAQ** series. Get free article updates [here](#).)

As your children grow, everything seems more important — mistakes have bigger consequences, peers can be a bigger negative influence, and there is potential for embarrassment on social media.

All of those things are real concerns.

As a response, many parents shift into “hypervigilant panic mode.”

They drill their children for answers. They hover over **homework completion**. They tighten the house rules and expectations.

This all comes from a well-meaning place. You love your children and want the absolute best for them. You don’t want to **see them fail or struggle**. And you definitely don’t want them to become distant.

Unfortunately, “panic-mode” usually backfires.

Instead of keeping your children close, they start to push back and pull away.

Thankfully, there are a few alternatives that will keep the communication with your tween or teen open and your relationship strong.

8 Tips for Strong Communication with your Tween or Teen

Keeping the communication with your children open and strong through the teen years may not come naturally to you at first. And that's OK.

You don't have to be a perfect communicator to be the support your child needs.

There are a few things to keep in mind as you go through the ups and downs of learning to communicate well with your child who is growing up to be an independent adult:

- **The only person you can control is you.** As much as you'd like to influence your child's every move, you can't. So, keep the focus on your own emotions, thoughts, and actions.
- **Calm yourself before responding.** One deep breath may be the difference between a productive conversation and a **power struggle**. Imagine what three deep breaths would do!
- **Use other adults as a sounding board or for venting frustrations.** When you're feeling overwhelmed, seek support from friends or a mental health professional.
- **Be flexible rather than rigid.** Explore other options and look at things from different perspectives. If something doesn't work, try it a different way.
- **Don't give up.** Your child needs you. *You*. In all of your imperfections, mistakes, and quirks. Stick with them and remain committed to the relationship.

OK, onto the tips:

1. Give Them Your Attention

Do you know how frustrating it can be when your child is staring at their phone instead of listening to you? Yep. It can feel the same way to your child. Rather than trying to multitask, give them your focused attention. This may mean putting your phone aside or stopping what you're doing. If you really can't give your attention, reschedule for a later time, but realize the moment may pass and your child may no longer want to talk about it later.

2. Watch Your First Response

Phrases like, "You went WHERE?!" or "You did WHAT?!" are guaranteed to end the conversation. Jumping into anger or panicking are also ineffective. Instead, take a deep breath and pause before you respond. This helps you stay present with your child and remain focused on the conversation. It also demonstrates to your kids that you are a safe place to talk about big feelings, problems, and concerns.

3. Keep Opinions to Yourself

As your child grows, they will become more passionate about friends, causes, and ideals. Resist the urge to comment on the quality of the friendship or make judgement calls about a friend's character. Negative comments about things that are important to your child may shut down communication or drive them away. Instead, be curious, willing to hear their opinion, even if it's different from your own. Always intervene if safety is a concern.

4. Listen With the Intent to Understand

Keep the conversation moving by focusing less on your responses and more on truly understanding what your child is trying to say. Asking open-ended questions like, "Then what happened?" or encouraging them to "Tell me more about that" is a great way to gather more information. Ask clarifying questions if needed, and periodically repeat back what you hear, to make sure that you are really tracking with your child.

5. Don't Solve It

Your child may not necessarily be looking to you for solutions to their challenges and problems. Often, what a child needs more than anything is a **listening ear**. Someone who is willing to sit with them while they process, cry, or think. Offering a "simple" solution usually ends the conversation and misses an opportunity to connect with your child. If you're unsure what your child needs, ask, "Are you looking for solutions or do you just want me to listen?"

6. Offer Empathy

Knowing what to say, especially when big feelings bubble to the surface, can be uncomfortable. Rather than launching into a lecture, take a deep breath. Put yourself in your child's shoes: How are they feeling? What's going on emotionally? How would you feel in this situation? Then, put these answers into words. Keep it simple: "That must have felt lonely." You don't have to agree with their actions to see things from their perspective.

FREE VIDEO TRAINING

How to Handle Rudeness, Back Talk, and Other Triggering Behavior From Your Kids

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7. Brainstorm Together

Problems and challenges need solutions, not punishments. Instead of "laying down the law" or "showing them who's boss," engage your child in a **problem-solving discussion**. Use the skills above to set the stage: listen, gather information, and offer empathy. Then, express your

concern. Look for ways that both you and your child can come to a mutually satisfactory solution. Review the solution after a few days and make changes as necessary.

8. Don't Force Eye Contact

If your child is more reserved about talking with you, give them plenty of opportunities to communicate without the pressure of a face-to-face conversation. Some kids would rather talk via text, write back and forth in a notebook, or may bring something up while driving in the car. If your child is a slow processor or has difficulty organizing thoughts, avoid rapidly firing questions or lumping questions together. Allow time for thinking and silence.

Focus on the Relationship, Not Perfection.

Even though your child may be seeking out their peers for support and encouragement more often, you still play a significant role in helping them make good choices and process through challenging situations.

Embrace the opportunity to help your child practice emotion identification, problem solving, and healthy communication skills while they are still in your home.

If you find yourself shifting into "hypervigilant panic mode," take a deep breath (or three).

Remind yourself to keep the relationship with your child the priority, rather than being right or having control.

Step back.

Find a way to reconnect with your child. Maybe it's a hug, a little note, or a coffee date.

And then give these communication tips another try.

How to Take the Stress Out of Family Gatherings

childmind.org/article/how-to-take-the-stress-out-of-family-gatherings/



Tips for helping your kids be at their best and have fun, too

Writer: [Rachel Elmke](#)

Clinical Experts: [Rachel Busman, PsyD, ABPP](#), [Steven Dickstein, MD](#)

We know from the songs and movies that holidays are supposed to be an exciting, meaningful time for families to reunite and celebrate the things we cherish. We set aside time to practice both religious rituals and family traditions, we give thanks, and, of course, later on, we give presents. But [sometimes holiday gatherings are less magical and more...well...stressful.](#)

The [vacation from school and work means a break from routine](#), something kids and parents alike depend on. Many families travel, facing traffic and long airplane rides, to attend one or more family get-togethers with rarely seen relatives who expect kisses and catching up. And most of these occasions will involve unfamiliar vegetable dishes.

How can anxious or easily frustrated children hope to survive all that? We've compiled a list of seasonal tips to help all kids — and parents — enjoy the party.

Minimize conflict over behavior

Your kids know the rules at your house, but in the excitement and novelty of a relative's home, good behavior can be a casualty. Always have a conversation before leaving your house about how you expect your children to behave, and don't shy away from specifics.

"Knowing what the rules are at someone else's house is always helpful for kids," says [Steven Dickstein, MD](#), a child and adolescent psychiatrist.

psychiatrist

A physician who is trained to diagnose, treat and prevent psychiatric disorders.

"They know that you behave differently in church or synagogue than you do on the basketball court; they need to know what the rules are at grandma's house." If you have any questions about the house rules, don't be afraid to ask.

Talk to your hosts early

Besides preparing your children, sometimes it's necessary to prepare your relatives so they know what to expect. "A child who has [behavior difficulties at school](#) is going to have them at grandma's house," warns Dr. Dickstein, "so make sure their expectations are realistic. As a parent you never want to put your children in a situation where they're set up to fail."

Dr. Dickstein also recommends putting a moratorium on criticizing. "Warn family members about sensitive topics in the same way you'd warn people in advance that your child has a nut allergy," advises Dr. Dickstein. If you have a [body-conscious teen](#), no one should chide them for taking seconds on mashed potatoes. If your brother doesn't believe [ADHD](#) is real, now isn't the time to discuss it.

Plan ahead for some peace and quiet

For kids who are easily overstimulated or [sensitive to things like noise and crowds](#), [Rachel Busman, PsyD](#), a clinical psychologist, recommends arranging for another room they can use when they need a break. "During family gatherings we want to achieve a balance between being social with relatives while also knowing that, if things get too overwhelming and intense, there's a place to take a break and just be quiet."

Keep kids occupied

Kids like [structured activities](#), and they'll probably be missing them while school is out. Fortunately the holidays lend themselves to art projects and family-friendly movies that kids enjoy. You can even start new family traditions like cutting out and decorating sugar cookies or throwing a ball around outside.

If you are [traveling with a child who will need to sit in a car for any length of time](#), Dr. Busman advises packing a bag with multiple activities, particularly if the child has a lot of energy. "Don't just think four or five activities will be enough because you could be through those things before you even get on the highway," she says.

When traveling Dr. Busman also recommends planning for breaks, even if it's not that long of a trip. "Kids who get restless or have difficulty managing their impulsive behavior might really benefit from getting out of the car and running around for a few minutes."

Discuss social expectations

Parents should have different social expectations for different kids, and if necessary, communicate them to your extended family. "You want to avoid those mandatory hugs and kisses or cheek-pinching for kids that don't do that or like it," says Dr. Dickstein.

Kids with [selective mutism](#) should not be pressured to talk during family gatherings (and relatives shouldn't expect them to talk either). If you have an [autistic](#) child who has been working on their [social skills](#), maybe you can agree that they will sit at the table next to you and talk to familiar people — others should be expected to understand.

Getting along with cousins and other kids they don't see often can be a challenge. Just because kids are approximately the same age [doesn't mean they'll be natural friends](#), but they should still try to get along — with adult support if needed. If your daughter gets easily frustrated when she doesn't get her way, encourage her to share and be polite with her cousins — and let her know she should find you if conflict arises that they can't settle amicably.

Dr. Dickstein says family gatherings can be a teachable moment. "Let kids know that family is important and sometimes you have to deal with people you don't really like, but you should work it out if you can. As parents you are probably doing that with your relatives too, so you can model good social behavior."

Think about the menu

Family gatherings centered on a meal can put a lot of pressure on kids who are [picky eaters](#) or who have sensory issues that limit their diet. If you are going to someone else's house for dinner and you know the menu will be a problem, Dr. Busman suggests packing something your child will eat and bringing it with you.

Have a conversation with your child ahead of time to reassure them, explaining, "I know we're going over to your aunt's house and there's going to be some different foods there, but we'll make sure that we bring some things that you like. It would be great if you could try something else, too." Exploring new foods is good for kids, but it shouldn't be the most important thing.

Manage your expectations

Both Dr. Busman and Dr. Dickstein agree that managing your own expectations of what the holidays "should" be like is the most essential step to any holiday gathering. "As parents we should check in with ourselves over what our own expectations are and *not* extend them to our kids," says Dr. Busman. "It would be great if the kids could sit at the table and eat a nice holiday meal with us, but they're probably not going to want to sit still for a long time. It's important to appreciate that kids might find the fun in other things, like watching a movie with their cousins or running around outside. And that's OK."

Dr. Dickstein advises identifying one or two things you would like your kids to get out of the holidays — an idea, a value, a memory of doing something special together as a family — and work on achieving that. "But above all, give yourself a break," he says. "You can't make everyone happy, and [perfect holidays are nonexistent](#). Think of all those Hollywood comedies about disastrous family gatherings. There's a reason why they're funny."

Frequently Asked Questions

How can I manage holiday hardships?

You can manage holiday behavior challenges by communicating expectations to your child before leaving the house. For example, you can tell them explicitly that running inside isn't allowed at their grandparents' house. Also, you can try to keep them occupied, schedule some quiet time during the gathering so they aren't over-stimulated, and talk to the hosts ahead of time so that expectations are realistic.

6 Hacks for Homework Overwhelm

Help your child remain focused and calm by planning transition times, refraining from nagging, and trying these other tried-and-true best practices for reducing homework stress.

By [Beverley Holden Johns](#) Updated on August 1, 2025



After a long school day spent completing worksheets, staying seated, and managing assignments, your child predictably and understandably revolts at the mention of homework. (Hello, cognitive overload and academic anxiety.)

How can you support your child so they feel less pressure? Follow these tried-and-true best practices to prevent homework mutiny.

6 Steps to Reduce Homework Stress

Step #1. Plan Transition Time

Your child needs time to decompress after school. Provide a healthy snack. Encourage them to participate in a sport or in another afternoon activity. If the weather and your schedule permit, take a walk together to clear your heads in the fresh air.

Step #2. Sort Assignments

Ask your child where they'd like to do their [homework](#) — on the kitchen table, in their bedroom, on the floor? Sit with them in their chosen location and help them begin their homework by reviewing their assignments and checking the week's upcoming deadlines.

[Get This Download: [Smart Homework Strategies](#)]

Step #3. Begin with Preferred Tasks

Have your child estimate how long it will take them to complete each task. Ask them to choose the easiest assignment and start with that one. This strategy, known as [behavioral momentum](#), works like this: Your student completes the undaunting task successfully, which provides momentum to keep going and finish the harder or more boring assignments.

Step #4. Hit Pause and Reset

Break tasks into manageable parts. If your child loses focus after 15 minutes of work, have them take a mindful minute to reset with some stretches, deep breathing, and a glass of water

before they return to the task. After it's finished, compare the time it took to complete the task with your child's estimate. This review reinforces an awareness of time.

Step #5. Provide Help When Needed

Offer your child encouragement and assistance as needed, especially with assignments they find challenging. Let the teacher(s) know that your child struggled with those assignments and explain why.

Step #6. Refrain from Nagging

Make “homework time” as positive as possible. Avoid nagging or pleading. If you see a power struggle coming, take a deep breath and say something like, “OK, you do the first math problem and then I’ll help you with the rest.” Give them time to consider these words. You might want to physically move away from your child. When you see them begin to work, move closer and say something positive. Sometimes, an overwhelmed child just needs time to process how to move forward.

How to Reduce Homework Stress: Next Steps

- **Free Download:** [Top 5 Homework Frustrations — and Fixes for Each](#)
- **Learn:** [15 Tips for Reducing Homework Stress & Completion Time](#)
- **Read:** [The ADHD Homework System We Swear By](#)

Beverly Holden Johns is a learning and behavior specialist. For 40 years, she has worked with public school students who have learning disabilities and emotional/behavioral disorders.

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