

# Bright Beginnings

A newsletter for families and educators of infants and preschool-age children with special needs

**Finding reliable parenting information can be a challenge. There are many books and articles, some good and some not so good. How do you know what to read, especially when you are busy and there's so little time?**

## What is Just in Time Parenting?

Extension *Just in Time Parenting* (JITP) is an outreach innovation that brings quality research-based information to families at the time it can be most useful and make the biggest difference in their lives. Over the past 25 years the Cooperative Extension faculty in land-grant universities have developed and evaluated an unusually parent-friendly series. Capitalizing on the “teachable moment” monthly “just in time” newsletters are delivered, keyed to the age of each parent’s child. A team of Extension professionals from over 30 land-grant universities is transforming these research-based age-paced newsletters into a national interactive internet resource on parenting.



## The Extension *Just in Time Parenting* website includes these great resources:

- Age-paced newsletters that can be downloaded and printed.
- Facts sheets.
- Frequently asked questions.
- Access to experts across the country.
- Upcoming local Extension programs.

Although the JITP materials currently focus on infants, the information will extend from pregnancy to parenting in the teen years.

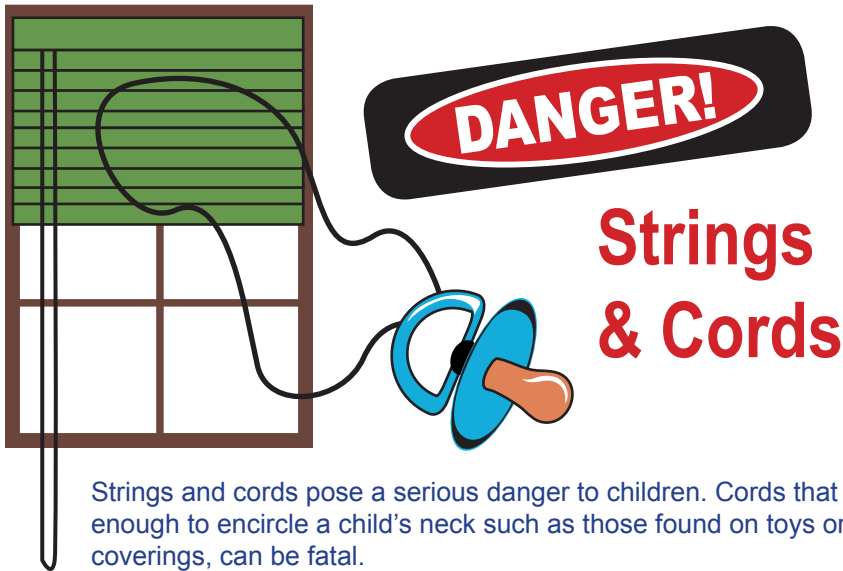
## How can *Just in Time Parenting* make such a big difference?

Because manageable amounts of information addressing the exact challenges you are facing reach you each month, *Just in Time Parenting* will probably be one of your favorite “bookmarks.”

- JITP pulls together the core information you need to help your child and family thrive.
- JITP connects you to resources and information when your child may need help.
- JITP can be read by all adults in your family, and can help dispel child-rearing myths and misinformation.
- JITP is easy to get and a convenient way to learn how you can help your child grow up healthy and ready for success.

Age-paced newsletters deliver *Just in Time Parenting*, providing parents with information they need to support and guide the growth of their child. We hope you find the Just in Time Parenting resources helpful. Please sign up for the age-paced newsletters and give us your feedback!

Check it out at: <http://www.extension.org/parenting>



Strings and cords pose a serious danger to children. Cords that are long enough to encircle a child's neck such as those found on toys or window coverings, can be fatal.

Pacifiers attached to strings or ribbons are often placed around infants' necks or attached to clothing. They can become tightly twisted, or catch on crib corner posts or other objects and cause strangulation. In an attempt not to lose the pacifier, you could lose a child.

Hood and neck strings should be removed from all children's outerwear, jackets and sweatshirts. Drawstrings on the waist or bottom of clothing can also be a hazard if they are longer than 3 inches outside the garment when fully expanded. These strings should not have knots or toggles on the free ends. One way to prevent the string from becoming a hazard is to sew the string at midpoint to the garment so it cannot be pulled out through either side. Children's outerwear that has alternative closures such as snaps, buttons, velcro or elastic should be used.

Window coverings such as mini blinds and roman shades are frequently associated with strangulation of children under 5. Younger victims, usually between 10-15 months, can become entangled in cords from window coverings near their cribs. Older children between ages 2-4 become entangled in cords while climbing on furniture to look out the window.

If you are purchasing new window coverings please look for items that are cordless. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission over 200 infants and young children have died accidentally by strangling in window cords since 1990.

If you own older window coverings, please go to [www.windowcoverings.org](http://www.windowcoverings.org) to order free retro-fit kits to make your window coverings safe.

Source: "Words from Wendy," March 2011. By Wendy Taylor, R.N. 1-800-657-5856, ext. 16 or 1-641-423-5044, ext. 16.

*"Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'"*

— Martin Luther King Jr.

## Angel Food Ministries

*"A Food Ministry With A Servant's Heart"*

Angel Food Ministries is a non-profit, non-denominational organization dedicated to providing grocery relief to communities throughout the United States.

Angel Food works through churches and community organizations in over 32 states. For further information, please take a few minutes to peruse our website. [www.angelfoodministries.com](http://www.angelfoodministries.com). New menus will be given each month.

To obtain a monthly flier or for further local information, please contact:

### **Cedar Falls/Waterloo**

**Pastor Helen M. Seenster**

319-234-5928 or

E-mail [Angel Food Ministries at hmsministries@mchsi.com](mailto:Angel Food Ministries at hmsministries@mchsi.com).

### **Marshalltown**

**Blair Benefield**

First Baptist Church

641-753-3528.

### **Charles City**

**Ruth Yeaton, Director**

First Baptist Church

105 Chapel Lane

Charles City, IA 50616

1-641-228-1906

### **Clear Lake**

**Curtis McGinnis, Director**

Church of Christ

2010 14th Avenue, N.

Clear Lake, IA 50428

1-641-357-5813 or

1-641-529-2274



**We Accept Food Stamps (EBT)**

## Family & Educator Connection

The Family & Educator Connection (FEC) staff is available by phone or in person to meet with parents and assist them in preparing for IEP (Individual Education Program) meetings. One role of FEC staff is to help parents participate more effectively in the IEP process by answering their questions, giving them the opportunity to discuss their concerns, and helping them organize their thoughts. Preparation for IEP meetings might include:

- Explaining the IEP process and what parents might expect during IEP meetings.
- Review of procedural safeguards, such as:
  - Any IEP prepared before an IEP meeting is a draft for review and revision at the meeting.
  - Parents may call an IEP meeting at any time for review of the IEP.
  - IEP meetings are to be scheduled at convenient times.
- Helping parents clarify their priorities and concerns and assisting them in articulating expectations and their vision for their student.
- Providing information, such as worksheets and outlines, to help parents prepare for the IEP meeting.
- With parent permission, FEC staff may discuss parents' concerns and issues with the AEA Special Education personnel responsible for that school.

## Attendance at Meetings

It is the responsibility of the Team Representative or AEA support services provider and all members of the IEP team to support the involvement of the parents in the IEP process. FEC staff may be requested to attend an IEP meeting by the school, AEA staff, or the parents. Situations where it may be appropriate for FEC staff to attend an IEP meeting include:

- When parents indicate they are still unclear about the IEP process, after efforts to clarify the process for them.
- When parents report they feel intimidated.
- When parents feel they do not have opportunities for input or feel that their input is not valued.
- When either the parents or the school anticipate that emotions could get in the way of the IEP process and take focus away from student needs.
- When there is a pre-appeal pending.
- When parents feel their rights have been violated.
- When requested by the AEA administration.

Contact the Family & Educator Connection at any of three regional AEA 267 offices:

**Deb Paton**, Cedar Falls 319-273-8265 [dpaton@aea267.k12.ia.us](mailto:dpaton@aea267.k12.ia.us)

**Sandy Kraschel**, Clear Lake 641-357-6125 [skraschel@aea267.k12.ia.us](mailto:skraschel@aea267.k12.ia.us)

**Andy Lawler**, Marshalltown 641-753-3564 [alawler@aea267.k12.ia.us](mailto:alawler@aea267.k12.ia.us)

Source: AEA 267 Family & Educator Connection "Tips for IEP Meetings" August 2011



## New Resource in the Family & Educator Library:

"Guardianship and Conservatorship in Iowa, Issues in Substitute Decision Making" by the Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council. This 79 page document is very complete and easy to understand. Call your regional Family & Educator Connection office if you'd like to check it out.

## How to Receive Reimbursement for Transportation, Meals, and Hotels

If your child is receiving Medicaid, you are able to receive partial reimbursement for mileage to out-of-county medical appointments. You are also eligible for reimbursement for some meals during your trip. Hotel stays may also be reimbursed. You may also be able to have assistance arranging for a ride to appointments.

### To receive reimbursement, you must:

1. Call the Transportation Management Group (TMS) at least three days prior to your child's appointment. The TMS number is: 1-866-572-7662.
2. When you call, please have:
  - Member's full name, home address, telephone, and Medicaid ID Number.
  - The name of the driver and the relationship of the driver to the patient.
  - The driver's mailing address and telephone number.
  - The trip dates.
  - The medical provider's name, address, telephone number, and fax number.

(The medical provider is whomever you or your child is coming to see such as a doctor, dentist, physical therapist, etc.)

After calling TMS to schedule your trip, you will be given mileage reimbursement forms. These forms need to be completed and signed by the medical staff member (doctor, counselor, or clinician). TMS will also ask for photocopies of the driver's license for the driver and proof of auto insurance such as insurance card or policy. Mileage forms must be submitted to TMS within 30 days following the appointment.

For more information go to [www.tmsmanagementgroup.com/iowa/faq/](http://www.tmsmanagementgroup.com/iowa/faq/)

Source: Reprinted with permission from the Center for Disabilities and Development

# Proven Stress Reducers

1. Get up fifteen minutes earlier in the morning. The inevitable morning mishaps will be less stressful.
2. Don't rely on your memory. Write down all appointments and things that you must accomplish that day.
3. Procrastination is stressful. Whatever you want to do tomorrow, do it **today**.
4. Plan ahead, i.e., Don't let the gas tank get below one-quarter full.
5. Be prepared to wait. An I-phone can make a wait in a post office line almost pleasant.
6. Simplify, simplify, simplify.
7. Create order out of your chaos. Organize your home and workplace so that you know exactly where things are. Put things away where they belong and you won't have to go through the stress of losing things.
8. Become more flexible. Some things are worth not doing perfectly and some issues are well to compromise upon.
9. Eliminate destructive self-talk: "I'm too old to...", "I'm too fat...", etc.
10. Do one thing at a time. When you are with someone, be with that person and with no one or nothing else. When you are busy with a project, concentrate on doing **that** project and forget about everything else you have to do.
11. If an especially "unpleasant" task faces you, do it early in the day and get it over with.

Source: "Bright Beginnings," Fall 2002.

## 'I Didn't Mean To Say That'

The following recently was sent by email from a teacher to the parent of an autistic child.

"Just wanted to let you know that we are having a lot of behavior problems these last few days."

The parent was frustrated. "There was no inquiry on what might be occurring at home; no supportive vibe; no thoughts as to how we might support my child," the parent said.

The parent is justifiably frustrated. After all, what does the email really say? "Your child is being a pain. Fix it."

The teacher may have had good intentions. But the email focuses on the wrong issue – the child's behavior, rather than concern for the child's success. So by refocusing the issue to that of the child's success, the more appropriate question would be: "I'm concerned about some of the things I'm seeing in class. Is there anything I should know about? Do you have some ideas for how I could be more helpful?" The focus, now, is on problem-solving and the child's well being, not on the behavior.

Parents, be upfront (and courteous) about the communication you need. Teachers, do the same. Together, you both are critical to the child's long-term success.

Source: "Each and Every Child" Volume 1, Issue 3, June 2011, Jim Flansburg, Interagency Liaison. Quick news for Parents, Teachers, and Students, (An e-newsletter by the Iowa Department of Education's Bureau of Student and Family Support Services).

## Mental Health First Aid

This fall, AEA 267 is offering a course that is designed to provide educators, parents, and other service providers the basic skills needed to help someone who is developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. Emphasis is placed on building mental health literacy and helping people identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illness.

Participants will learn how to recognize warning signs of mental illness; assess for risk of suicide or harm; construct an action plan to provide mental health first aid.

### Sessions are scheduled:

Tuesday evenings from October 4 through November 1  
Cedar Falls AEA 267 office  
5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Register on the AEA 267 web site at [www.aea267.k12.ia.us/pd/](http://www.aea267.k12.ia.us/pd/)  
AEA 267 Offerings, course # 4685.

## Words EVERY Child Needs to Hear

Words can hurt, especially when spoken to a child by an adult. Adults often underestimate the power of words on a child. Every child needs to hear positive words – every day!

### Here are some words to say to help children shine:

- ★ I'm so lucky to spend time with you.
- ★ You are a great helper.
- ★ You're very special to me.
- ★ You're a great kid.
- ★ I love talking to you.
- ★ You make me smile.
- ★ You are very good at that.
- ★ I'm so happy to see you.
- ★ You're awesome.
- ★ I love you!

Source: Reprinted with permission from "Council Concerns," Fall 2010.



## Natural Resources

### Resources from the Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

The Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, funded by the Office of Head Start, recently published the following two resources for parents, early childhood mental health consultants, and other early childhood staff:

- *My 1st Year* is designed to document a baby's first year of life and can be used as a tool by both providers and parents.
- *Discovering Feelings* offers caregivers an easy way to: (1) introduce emotional vocabulary to a child; (2) illustrate for children a range of emotions; (3) Validate the wide range of emotions experienced by children; and (4) Assist children in linking emotional vocabulary with specific actions.

Both are available online, along with tips for how to use them, at [http://www.ecmhc.org/baby\\_books.html](http://www.ecmhc.org/baby_books.html)

Source: Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation – Retrieved January 28, 2011



### Resource for Families and Schools

<http://www1.cyfernet.org/about.html-howhelp>

CYFERnet is a resource of reliable, high quality, research-based information for professionals serving children, youth and families and for parents. CYFERnet's Web site brings together the best, children, youth and family resources of all the public land-grant universities in the country. College and university faculty carefully review materials posted on CYFERnet.

## Something About Autism

You hear a lot about autism spectrum disorder (ASD) these days, but how much do you really know about it?

Though the spectrum includes several different disorders, they share similar symptoms and developmental histories (how those characteristics develop over time). They also share these three patterns:

1. Communication difficulties
2. Social problems
3. Restrictive activities (fewer things interest them)

ASD is a developmental disability with symptoms occurring shortly after birth or by age 2. It is a neurological disorder – they have differences in the way their brains work. There are at least two causes:

- 75-85 percent of the cases are genetic.
- The remainder comes from pre- or post-natal problems.

Since the spectrum includes everything from mild to severe, a diagnosis of autism spectrum does not necessarily mean special education. The individual's pattern has to affect his or her social and academic performance.

Regardless of education needs, people working with those with ASD should have high expectations in order to maximize their educational experiences. Other conditions also may contribute to success, but with appropriate behavioral and education techniques, those within the spectrum can live fulfilling lives.

Source: "Each and Every Child," Volume 1, Issue 5. August 2011, Jim Flansburg, Interagency Liaison. (An e-newsletter by The Iowa Department of Education's Bureau of Student and Family Support Services)



## Autism Workshops from University of Iowa Children's Hospital

The University of Iowa's Children's Hospital has announced a series of free workshops for parents. All of the workshops are scheduled for Saturdays, from 10:00 – noon on the U of I campus in the Rembolt Conference Room of the Center for Disabilities and Development. Supervised play will be provided for children ages 3 to 10.

### Workshop topics include:

- Managing your child's feeding problems, September 10
- Managing Challenging Behaviors, October 8
- Teaching your child independence, November 19
- Improving your child's social skills, December 10

You may register on-line at [www.uihealthcare.org/autismcenterworkshops](http://www.uihealthcare.org/autismcenterworkshops) or call 319-467-5658.

For more information contact Lisa Kemmerer, UI Children's Hospital Autism Center Coordinator at 319-467-5658 or [lisa-kemmerer@uiowa.edu](mailto:lisa-kemmerer@uiowa.edu).



## Looking for Support? Support Groups

There are a number of support groups across Iowa and in AEA 267. Right now there are a number of active support groups in our areas focusing on the needs of children and young adults who have autism, Down Syndrome and other issues. Here are a few:

### ADHD Support Group

Meets second Monday of the month during the school year at Upper Iowa University, 3563 University Avenue, Waterloo from 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. For more information contact Barb at 319-266-2901 or [bum1992@cfu.net](mailto:bum1992@cfu.net).

### Autism Spectrum Support Group

Individuals wanting further information or a personal parent contact should contact: Chris and Tyann Rouw 319-266-5876, or the Family-Educator Connection at 319-273-8265.

More information about local news and information may be seen at Chris and Tyann's website:  
<http://www.autismiowa.com>.

### Autism Dietary Network Support Group

For more information call Amy Roberts at 319-233-8043.

### Are You Interested?

#### ASD Support Group Forming

Jeni Oelkers is a mom who is interested in establishing a support group for parents of children affected by autism and related conditions, and others who are interested in autism spectrum disorders.

If anyone is interested in making a connection through an ASD support group, please contact Jeni at 641-512-6230 or [jhoelkers@gmail.com](mailto:jhoelkers@gmail.com).

### ASD/PDD Support Group

A support group for parents. Meetings are held at 3:00 p.m. the first Sunday of the month in Mason City and the third Sunday of the month in St. Ansgar. Locations are Whiskey Creek Woodfire Grill, 1519 4th Street SW in Mason City and Fourth Street Coffee Shop, 230 West 4th Street, in St. Ansgar. For more information, or to sign up for the group's E-mail, send a message to [pddsupport@mchsi.com](mailto:pddsupport@mchsi.com).

### Designer Genes – A Support Group for families of children with Down Syndrome

Provides parent groups as well as family events and playgroups for young children.

For more information call 319-404-0396 or e-mail [designergenes2005@yahoo.com](mailto:designergenes2005@yahoo.com).

### Epilepsy Support Group

Waterloo, Cedar Falls area. Held at the Kimball Ridge Center, Conference Room 1, 2101 Kimball Avenue, Waterloo, IA. Held the second Thursday of every ODD month at 6:30 p.m.

For more information contact: Karly Ashlock, Services Coordinator for Iowa Epilepsy Foundation North/Central Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, 1111 9th Street, Suite 275, Des Moines, IA 50314. Phone: 515-238-7660/Fax: 515-883-2292, Email: [kashlock@efncil.org](mailto:kashlock@efncil.org).

### F.A.S.T. Families of Autism Standing Together

Autism and GFCF (Gluten-Casein Free Diet) Support Group that meets in the Independence area. For more information call Cory or Renae Kress at 319-334-3832.

### Prader Willi Syndrome Association of Iowa

For more information please contact: Edie Bogaczyk, 515-987-0288 or [dbogaczyk@msn.com](mailto:dbogaczyk@msn.com).

### Support Group for Parents of Children with Special Needs

Just forming in the Iowa Falls area. For more information contact Andy Lawler. [alawler@aea267.k12.ia.us](mailto:alawler@aea267.k12.ia.us) or 631-844-2469.

## Calendar



**Friday, October 14, 2011 –  
Sunday, October 16, 2011**  
**Fall 2011 Autism Research  
Institute Conference**

Las Vegas Hilton  
Las Vegas, Nevada

For more information and to register visit [www.ARIConference.com](http://www.ARIConference.com)  
For additional assistance call:  
1-877-644-1184

**Friday, October 14, 2011**  
**Autism Society of Iowa**  
**Chapter ASI Fall Educational  
Conference:**

**Pivotal Response Treatment**  
with Daniel Openden, Ph.D., BCBA-D  
Sheraton Hotel  
West Des Moines, Iowa

Daniel Openden, Ph.D., BCBA-D is Vice President and Clinical Services Director for the Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center (SARRC) and Adjunct Professor at Arizona State University. He received his doctorate in Special Education, Disability, and Risk Studies under the mentorship of Drs. Robert and Lynn Koegel at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Dr. Openden has worked extensively with families of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders on both federal and state funded research projects; provided consulting and training for school districts across the country; presented research at regional, state, and national conventions; and has been published in peer reviewed journals and book chapters in the field.

He has expertise in developing training programs for teaching parents and professionals to implement Pivotal Response Treatment (PRT), a comprehensive, evidence-based treatment model for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Dr. Openden is currently an Associate Editor for the Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions and his research interests include parent education,

continued

professional development, positive behavior supports, early intervention, inclusion, and dissemination of service delivery models for children with autism spectrum disorders.

In the evening will be the 23rd Annual "Christmas In October" Silent and Live Auction Benefit.

For more information contact:  
Kris Steinmetz 515-327-9075,  
1-888-722-4799 or e-mail  
[autism50ia@aol.com](mailto:autism50ia@aol.com)

**Friday, October 14, 2011, Saturday, October 15, 2011**  
**Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children Annual Institute, "Partnering for Increasing Quality in Times of Change."**  
Holiday Inn Airport  
Des Moines, Iowa

For more information contact:  
Rhonda Bancroft 515-331-8000, ext. 12 or e-mail [Rhonda@iowaeyc.org](mailto:Rhonda@iowaeyc.org) or visit: [www.iowaeyc.org/conference-form.cfm](http://www.iowaeyc.org/conference-form.cfm)

**Sunday, October 23, 2011-Monday, October 24, 2011**  
**Learning Disabilities Association of Iowa**



**"Prescription for Success: Strategies for Behavior and Learning"**

Airport Holiday Inn  
Des Moines, Iowa

Scholarships are available to young adults who have learning disabilities and/or a parent who has a child with learning disabilities or ADD-ADHD from each AEA (Area Education Agency) across the State of Iowa. A stipend up to \$100 per each day's attendance at the conference is available for those needing financial assistance. For an application call your local AEA or call Donna Schletzbaum at 515-961-4125 or the LDA of Iowa office at 1-888-690-LDAI (5324) or 515-280-8558.

For more conference information visit: [http://www.lda-ia.org/conference\\_2011](http://www.lda-ia.org/conference_2011). as or contact Kathy Specketer, LDA State Coordinator [kathylda@askresource.org](mailto:kathylda@askresource.org); toll free IA: (888) 690-LDA1.



**Thursday, November 3, 2011- Friday, November 4, 2011**  
**Tri-State Regional Special Education Law Conference**

Embassy Suites-Downtown  
Omaha, Nebraska

This conference is designed for general and special education administrators and teachers, service providers, parents, advocates, lawyers and others involved in developing and supporting special education services for children with disabilities and their families.

Most sessions will require a background in special education procedures and practice in order to apply the information.

For more information and to register visit: [www.taese.org/cms/](http://www.taese.org/cms/)

**November – December**  
**Wednesday, November 30, 2011 – Saturday, December 3, 2011**  
**TASH Conference**  
**"No Excuses" Creating Opportunities in Challenging Times."**  
Hilton Atlanta  
Atlanta, Georgia

For more information contact:  
[TASH.conference@tash.org](mailto:TASH.conference@tash.org); call (202) 540-9020, or visit <http://tash.org/conferences-events/tash-conference/>

# Go Green!

Would you like to help save a tree?  
Then receive Bright Beginnings electronically!



(Cut above on dotted line, complete this form and return to address below)

**The Family & Educator Connection**  
**AEA 267**  
**3706 Cedar Heights Drive**  
**Cedar Falls, IA 50613**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## The Family & Educator Connection

The AEA 267 Family & Educator Connection provides information and support for families and educators around disability-related issues. Whether you would like to talk about family adjustment issues with a new baby or newly diagnosed disability, home-school communication issues, questions relating to understanding a disability, or parenting strategies, we are happy to take your call. We have quite a library of resources available for loan and a number of highly qualified people to consult. If you have a question, we will do our best to help you find the answer. We are available by phone, mail, e-mail or by appointment, in-person.

### **Cedar Falls/ Waterloo Office**

#### **Deb Paton**

3706 Cedar Heights Drive

Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613

Ph. 1-800-542-8375 or 1-319-273-8265

[dpaton@aea267.k12.ia.us](mailto:dpaton@aea267.k12.ia.us),

### **Clear Lake/Mason City Office**

#### **Sandy Kraschel**

Mason City Airport Grounds

9184 B 265th Street

Clear Lake, Iowa 50428

Ph. 1-800-392-6640 or 1-641-357-6125

[skraschel@aea267.k12.ia.us](mailto:skraschel@aea267.k12.ia.us)

### **Marshalltown Office**

#### **Andy Lawler**

909 South 12th Street

Marshalltown, Iowa 50158

Ph. 1-800-735-1539 or 1-641-844-2469

[alawler@aea267.k12.ia.us](mailto:alawler@aea267.k12.ia.us)

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