

## Star Wars, Peanuts and Malala: Top Family Movie Releases for Fall 2015 - ParentMap

Tuesday, October 13 2015, 12:10 PM

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# Star Wars, Peanuts and Malala: Top Family Movie Releases for Fall 2015

Wondering which fall movie promises to be a must-see? Read on

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By Gemma Alexander



Just in time for the rain, here is a list of theatrical releases to keep you entertained through the holidays. October has already yielded an impressive crop of new family releases. Try to catch one while they're still in the theater, and add the rest to your Netflix queue for watching in midwinter when they come out on video.

## *He Named Me Malala*, PG-13

**Release date:** in theaters

The story of teenage Nobel prizewinner Malala is educational and inspiring, even if the facts contained are a little terrifying. If the movie is half as good as the book, every member in the family old enough to watch it has a responsibility to do so. You'll each come away with a better understanding of just how far from equality the world we live in is today, and filled with hope in the knowledge that the world we want to live in can be built through our own actions.

**Age rec:** [Common Sense Media](#) approves this affecting documentary for ages 12 and up.



## *The Walk*, PG

**Release date:** in theaters



Not an obvious choice for kids, but this true story of the highwire walker Philippe Petit is rated PG. Plus, who can resist Joseph Gordon-Leavitt? Pair it with the picture books *The Man Who Walked Between the Towers* by Mordecai Gerstein and *Mirette on the Highwire* by Emily Arnold McCully to add a kid-focused angle to this introduction to old school thrill-seeking. The 2008 documentary *Man on Wire* could provide an interesting illustration of the difference between fictional and nonfictional treatments of history.

**Age rec:** Despite the absence of explosions and high speed car chases, the film builds sufficient suspense to rate a 12-and-older rating from [Common Sense Media](#).

## *Hotel Transylvania 2*, PG

**Release date:** in theaters

The original *Hotel Transylvania* was an animated *Father of the Bride* with monsters and a flimsy message about not judging others. [This sequel](#) that sees Dracula, voiced once again by Adam Sandler, struggling to keep his half-human grandmonster close by is likely more of the same. It's not high art, but it's harmless, and hey, it's almost Halloween. Until your kids are ready for the black-and-white classics, it will satisfy the seasonal monster movie urge.

**Age rec:** [Common Sense Media](#) approves this movie for ages 7 and up.

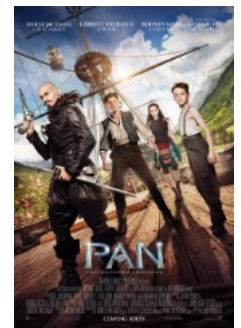


## *Pan*, PG

**Release date:** In theaters

Critics are not terribly impressed with [this origin story](#) that portrays Peter Pan as a London orphan kidnapped to work for the pirate Blackbeard (Hugh Jackman). Word is that J.M. Barrie's Victorian-era racial insensitivities have been cleaned up, and the acting is superb, but the story is badly written —messy and rushed. Expect a lot of CGI, action levels that are more Hollywood than Neverland, and a weak plot. It's a formula that has thrilled children for decades and left generations of parents wondering, "Maybe we should have waited for it to come out on video?"

**Age rec:** [Common Sense Media](#) approves *Pan* for ages 8 and older.



## *Goosebumps*, PG

**Release date:** October 16

If you want your monster movies with a shot of childhood nostalgia, I present [Goosebumps](#). When author R.L. Stine's monsters escape from his imagination into the real world, his daughter and a friend team up to save the town. This live action movie appears to be more about action than spookiness.

**Age rec:** [Common Sense Media](#) anticipates it will be appropriate for tweens. Jack Black plays Stine, if that helps you decide.

## *Suffragette*, PG-13

**Release date:** October 23

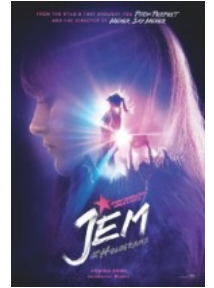
[Suffragette](#) takes a straightforward, history-lesson approach to the early 20th century movement for the women's right to vote in Great Britain. replacing twee images of women marching in bloomers with real-life stories of government brutality and gritty working-class life. Making a movie about women's rights, directed by a woman and starring a tour de force of British female actors (Carey Mulligan, Helena Bonham-Carter, Anne-Marie Duff) is a feminist accomplishment in an industry currently dominated by superheroes. But *Suffragette* has been taking heat for erasing the contributions of women of color with its all-white cast. The movie's premiere in England was disrupted by protesters chanting "Dead women can't vote," in an effort to draw attention to recent cuts in government funding to stop domestic violence. My two cents: *Suffragette* should be one giant teachable moment with numerous points of departure for serious discussions that parents and their tweens or teens (boys and girls, both, please!) should join in after the movie.

**Age rec:** Rated PG-13 but not yet reviewed by [Common Sense Media](#).



## *Jem and the Holograms*, PG

**Release date:** October 23



With Molly Ringwald and Juliette Lewis in major roles, this [80s reboot](#) may be aimed more at moms' memories than little girls' dreams of fame. Now-grown Jem fans are divided on whether this movie captures what they loved about the old cartoon, though, so it remains to be seen whether a new generation will latch on to the truly outrageous singer. Me? I didn't like Jem the first time around. Despite complaints that it ignores the women of color who were active in early feminism, I'm going to take my tween to the PG-13 [Suffragette](#) for our dose of girl power instead.

**Age rec:** [Common Sense Media](#) hasn't reviewed it yet, but *Jem and the Holograms* is expected to appeal to tween girls.

## *The Peanuts Movie*, rated G

**Release date:** November 6

I'm not sure my kids even know who Charlie Brown is, but I want to support the release of any movie with the endangered G rating. This [CGI-animated movie](#) from the creators of *Ice Age* and *Rio* promises to include all the old favorite characters and a familiar plot that just may involve a little redheaded girl. My guess? Kids will love Snoopy and wonder why the adults whose faces are never shown sound so funny, just like I did.

**Age rec:** [Common Sense Media](#) agrees that this movie might or might not please all ages, but it's unlikely to offend anyone.



## *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 2*, PG-13

**Release date:** November 20

Let's face it: you already know whether you're going to [this movie](#) or not and nothing I say will change your [child's] mind. Many adults have read *The Hunger Games* without understanding what the fuss is all about. Even if wild horses couldn't drag you to theater for this one, the odds are your middle grader will.

**Age rec:** It's too early for a full review on [Common Sense Media](#), but *Mockingjay Part 2* has already earned a PG-13 rating and promises to be intense, so plan on leaving the younger kids at home.

## *The Good Dinosaur*, (not yet rated but count on PG)

**Release date:** November 25

Two Pixar movies in one year! The premise of [this story](#) — an unlikely friendship set in an alternate reality in which dinosaurs never went extinct — sounds weak. But so did *Inside Out* (a whole movie inside a kid's head?) and *Ratatouille* (a rat that cooks!?) so I'm going to give Pixar the benefit of the doubt. Even their weaker films are better than most of what's marketed to kids. Plus, the trailer soundtrack features Of Monsters and Men, and I am defenseless against them.

**Age rec:** Not yet reviewed by [Common Sense](#). *The Good Dinosaur* is a pretty safe bet for a satisfying family movie.



## *Star Wars VII: The Force Awakens*, not yet rated

**Release date:** December 18

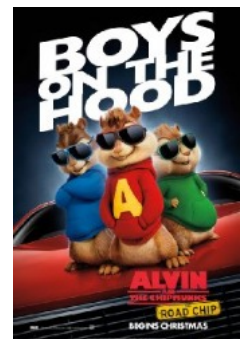
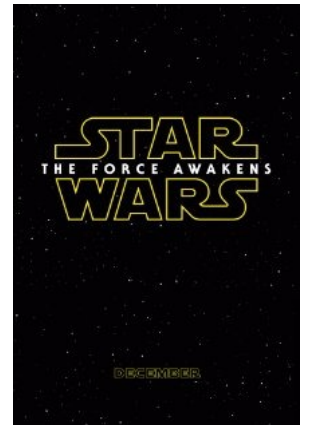
The upcoming [Star Wars release](#) needs no introduction, no matter how successful the studio has been at avoiding leaks. We already know Han Solo and Chewbacca make an appearance. Grown men have cried over the trailer, which also gave indications that the movie will handle diversity better than previous iterations. There are even hints of a female Jedi protagonist.

**Age rec:** The film hasn't been rated yet, but despite the potential for violent and scary scenes the only real question for most of us is whether to line up for opening day tickets or wait and watch it on Christmas Day. Note: It will be playing at Pacific Science Center's Boeing IMAX Theater in 3-D.



## *Alvin & the Chipmunks: The Road Chip*, not yet rated

**Release date:** December 23



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The last family movie release of 2015, [Alvin and the Chipmunks](#), doesn't really need an introduction either. We all know exactly what to expect. We subjected our parents to the high-pitched critters, I guess we have to put up with them in our turn. Maybe one adult can take one for the team and chaperone all the kids while the rest of us slip next door to watch *Star Wars* again.

**Age rec:** Not yet rated by [Common Sense Media](#), should be fine for all ages (right?)

October 11, 2015