

# 15 Movies That Help Kids Do the Right Thing

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## FAMILY MEDIA/MOVIES

# 15 Movies That Help Kids Do the Right Thing

And will help you discuss why that's important

BY GEMMA ALEXANDER

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We parents work hard to teach our kids to do the right thing. They're not easy conversations to have, which is why we recommend this unexpected strategy to help: Watch a movie.

## Make it an outing

The Social Justice Film Festival in Seattle runs Nov. 16–21, 2017. [Learn more about the program](#), including the section devoted to young filmmakers.

Here's a list of films with powerful stories of kids championing everything from gender equality to ethical treatment of animals.

- 1 [Brave Girl](#): It's not on Netflix, but this short, animated video about Clara Lemlich, the young Jewish woman who escaped pogroms in Ukraine and became a leader in the Shirtwaist Makers' Strike of 1909, is worth checking out from the public library. It's also available as a [picture book](#). **Ages 4 to 8**
- 2 [Pixie Hollow Games](#): With recognizable voice actors and relatively tight plotting, the *Pixie Hollow* movies are surprisingly good compared to the cynical merchandising grab that parents have come to expect from the straight-to-video kids' market. In *Pixie Hollow Games*, two very different characters learn to work together; other stories in the series teach lessons about valuing the work everyone does, and getting to know people before deciding what you think about

them. **Ages 4+**

- 3 [\*The Lorax\*](#): Critics and viewers agree that the 2012 theatrical release dishonored Dr. Seuss' legacy, but the animated movie from the 1970s does a better job capturing the spirit of the classic picture book. **Ages 5+**
- 4 [\*Dear Dumb Diary\*](#): Based on a tween novel, any child who has begun trying to find their place in school will identify with the protagonist's search for a way to stand out — and parents will appreciate that the solution does not come from a mall. **Ages 6+**
- 5 [\*Separate Is Never Equal\*](#): You will have to go to the library to find this short documentary about Sylvia Mendez, the young Latina who desegregated schools in California a decade before *Brown vs. Board of Education*. This *Reading Rainbow*-style film is based on a book that draws dialogue directly from court documents. **Ages 6+**
- 6 [\*Free Willy\*](#): A huge hit when it came out, this story of a young boy rescuing an orca from captivity is ready for a new generation. Use it not only to talk about ethical treatment of animals but to introduce the current challenges facing our most iconic local wildlife. **Ages 6+**
- 7 [\*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone\*](#): OK, so this one is obvious but that doesn't make it any less good! Harry Potter standing up to the dark wizard Voldemort is the main conflict, of course, but there are examples of everyday heroism throughout the eight-part movie series. **Ages 7+**
- 8 [\*The Eagle Huntress\*](#): This documentary narrated by Daisy

Ridley of *The Force Awakens* fame is about a 13-year-old Kazakh girl who bucks generations of male-only tradition to hunt with eagles. The premise of a girl entering a male-dominated field sounds straightforward, but the telling is so exquisite it's hard to believe it's really a documentary. Breathtaking cinematography, a heartwarming family dynamic and a heavy dose of girl-power make this one not to miss. **Ages 8+**

- 9 [Nelly's Adventure](#): The message is almost hidden behind Nelly's wild adventures as she partners with a pair of Roma siblings to thwart a cookie-cutter kids' movie villain. The would-be kidnapper is building a dam that will flood the Roma village, and wants to stop Nelly's father from building a wind power project. **Ages 8+**
- 10 [Wadjda](#): When 11-year-old Wadjda enters a Quran-reciting contest to fund her dream of buying a bicycle, the feisty Saudi girl fights traditional gender roles just by being herself. The film itself is groundbreaking; it was the first feature film shot entirely in Saudi Arabia and the first feature-length film made by a female Saudi director. **Ages 9+**
- 11 [He Named Me Malala](#): This documentary shares the famous story of Malala Yousafzai, the Pakistani teenager who stood up to the Taliban for the right to an education won a Nobel Prize. Malala has also [written a book](#) with Christina Lamb about her experiences. **Ages 12+**
- 12 [Girl Rising](#): Famous narrators from around the world including Cate Blanchett and Amitabh Bachchan share the true stories of nine girls fighting for an education. (For another excellent documentary on the same subject but that's appropriate for

documentary on the same subject but that's appropriate for younger kids, try [On the Way to School.](#)) **Ages 12+**

**13** [The Power of One](#): This powerful movie about fighting for change follows an orphaned English boy through a rough childhood in Afrikaner-controlled South Africa. When a college scholarship gives the teen a chance to escape hardship, he must choose whether to go to England or stay with his childhood friends and fight apartheid. The movie is based on a pair of [semi-autobiographical books](#) by Bryce Courtenay. **Ages 13+**

**14** [If You Build It](#): A high school shop class in a depressed Southern community builds a farmers market that sparks new businesses in this documentary that is as much about alternative education techniques as it is about design. **Ages 13+**

**15** [Sarafina!](#): In this movie starring Whoopi Goldberg, South African teenagers fight against apartheid in the Soweto Uprising. It's based on a Broadway musical. **Ages 15+**

And when the screen's off...

Try a book. [These reads](#) cover similar social justice topics.

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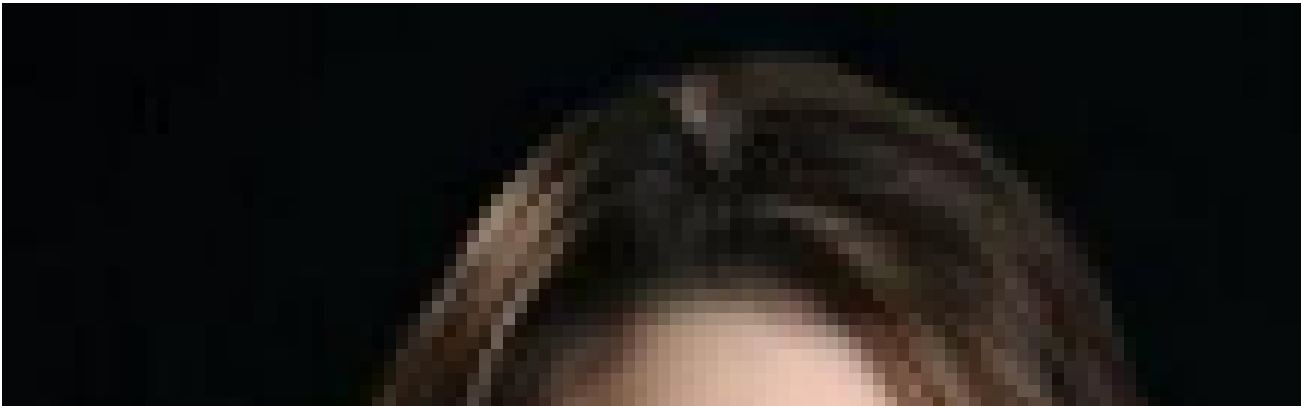
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## ABOUT AUTHOR





## BY GEMMA ALEXANDER

Gemma Alexander is a Seattle-based freelance writer with two daughters. When she is not writing for ParentMap, she [blogs about books and travel](#) and spends too much time on Twitter.

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