

FAMILY MEDIA/MOVIES

# 10 Feel-Good Family Movies (Without Any Violence)

From wandering cats to adventures on Mars, movies the whole family will enjoy

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I love an action movie as much as the next person, and [Bruce Lee is a role model](https://www.parentmap.com/article/bruce-lee-exhibit-wing-luke-seattle-kids) (<https://www.parentmap.com/article/bruce-lee-exhibit-wing-luke-seattle-kids>) in my household. But in a world where civil wars barely make the news and our own children risk getting shot in school hallways, sometimes you just want to watch a movie where the excitement results from literally anything besides physical violence.

Rom-coms are usually a safe bet, but for family movie night, you need a little more plot variation – and a lot less kissing – if everyone is going to have a good time. And truly nonviolent movies are hard to find – even the gentle “[WALL-E](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0910970/)” (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0910970/>)” has fight scenes. For families that need a break from bullets and beatdowns, we’ve pulled together this list of nonviolent movies for all ages.

## **“Winnie the Pooh**

**(<https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.d6a192f-93be-4e2a-3a1b69e78217?ie=UTF8&tag=parentmap-20>)”**

There are many versions of Winnie the Pooh, and all of them (except the new “[Blood and Honey](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt19623240/)” (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt19623240/>)) are wholesome. But for my money, the 2011 Walt Disney Animation Studios version is the most delightful. It’s sweet and simple enough for the youngest viewers. With Zoe Deschanel’s musical numbers and the witty interaction between the characters using text from the [original stories](https://seattle.bibliocommons.com/v2/record/S30C537543) (<https://seattle.bibliocommons.com/v2/record/S30C537543>), this movie is a joy for adults and kids. A true comfort film for the whole family. **All ages**



Photo credit: Amazon

**“My Neighbor Totoro (<https://www.amazon.com/My-Neighbor-Totoro-English-Language/dp/B08123SMCH?ie=UTF8&tag=parentmap-20>)”**

Studio Ghibli’s output is low in violence overall, and always comes with a message of peace. But “My Neighbor Totoro” stands out for breaking the rules of storytelling with no overarching conflict at all. There are difficulties, and in the climax, two sisters argue, but rather than following a traditional plot of conflict, rising tension and resolution, the movie celebrates exploration and discovery from a child’s eye view. From moving into a new house to meeting kindly forest spirits, and even getting lost, the true-to-life adventures of childhood are as life-affirming as a movie can get. **All ages**

**“The Phantom Tollbooth (<https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.66a3769-dc0e-4528-f335a8078784?ie=UTF8&tag=parentmap-20>)”**

If you ever find yourself in a hurry to get someplace you don’t even particularly want to go just because you’re bored where you are, “The Phantom Tollbooth” will rekindle your spirit. Accurately marketed as an “alphabeautiful, mathemagical” adventure, this 1970 hybrid live-action animation is a quirky exploration of a land of literal words and numbers. The [charming book](https://seattle.bibliocommons.com/v2/record/S30C3466756) (<https://seattle.bibliocommons.com/v2/record/S30C3466756>) it’s based on is a great supplement for its illustrations and to help younger kids get more of the puns. **All ages**

**“Singin’ in the Rain ([https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0045152/?ref=nv\\_sr\\_srg\\_0](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0045152/?ref=nv_sr_srg_0))”**

It’s a slight cheat to include “Singin’ in the Rain,” because the movie does include swordfights. But the fight scenes (masterful references to Errol Flynn classics) all take place in movies within the movie. The real storyline never gets more violent than a pie in the face and an actor mobbed by fans. Instead, problems are solved creatively, and all the action comes from some of the best dance numbers ever recorded on film. **All ages**

**“The Cave of the Yellow Dog ([https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0432325/?ref=fn\\_al\\_tt\\_1](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0432325/?ref=fn_al_tt_1))”**

This beautiful film is set in Mongolia and follows a young girl who herds her family's sheep by herself in the mountains. When she finds a stray dog, she has to choose between obedience to her father and her loyalty to her new canine best friend. The family's traditional life on the steppe is hard, but never violent. **Ages 7+ (for subtitles, rated G)**

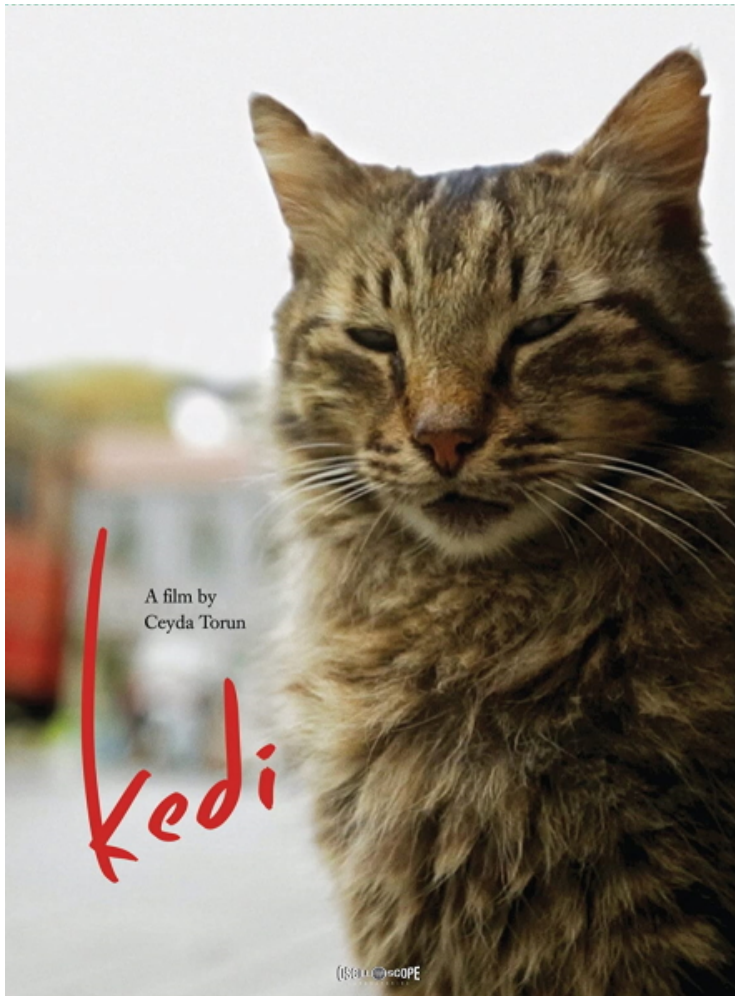


Photo credit: Amazon

## **"Kedi**

**(<https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.56a42a-4630-0337-10357e3f375a?ie=UTF8&tag=parentmap-20>)**

If you think your kids won't watch subtitled documentaries, "Kedi" is the film to prove you wrong. This movie documents the lives of Istanbul's semi-stray cats. The camera follows cats around on their daily adventures in long nonverbal sequences broken up by occasional interviews with local residents who talk about the cats. The subtitles will be manageable for any child who is comfortable reading chapter books, but even nonreaders will enjoy the film as a whole. **All ages**

## “Homeward Bound: The Incredible Journey

(<https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.c2a4cf1-b7fc-ee12-6cb3431a0140?ie=UTF8&tag=parentmap-20>)”

Proving that drama and tension are not the sole province of violence — or humans — “Homeward Bound: The Incredible Journey” follows three pets as they travel across the wilderness in search of their human family. It can be tricky to determine what counts as violence when the main characters aren’t human. The trio of two dogs and a cat are frequently in peril, and occasionally in interspecies conflict, but there is no animal abuse and animal struggles are not anthropomorphized. It’s based on a book (<https://seattle.bibliocommons.com/v2/record/S30C85361>), for kids who want more of the story. **All ages**



Photo credit: Amazon

## “Song of the Sea

(<https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.2ea93c0-21df-89f3-2e5cacca83ee?ie=UTF8&tag=parentmap-20>)”

Song of the Sea is a beautiful movie in which a young Irish boy and his selkie sister (mermaids) try to free the fairies and save the spirit world. But whether to classify it as nonviolent is complex. On the one hand, there are antagonists who do harm — the children’s grandmother takes them from their father, and the Owl Witch turns people

and fairies to stone. But both antagonists are acting in error from a place of love. The children's creativity and kindness in resolving this situation is critical to the story. The story and its bewitching soundtrack are heartbreaking, but ultimately, nonviolent. **Ages 7+**

### **"The Martian**

**(<https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.26af71e-b58b-6a4a-7a62543eab90?ie=UTF8&tag=parentmap-20>)**

"The Martian" is rated PG-13 for language, injury and brief nudity, but hear me out. Yes, the most memorable line in the movie uses a swear word. But don't you want your kids to live in a world where the first response to a threatening situation is, "I'm gonna have to science the shit out of this"? The plot hinges on science, but never gets bogged down in technical details, instead making science cool. My daughter loved this movie so much in middle school that she [read the book](#)

(<https://seattle.bibliocommons.com/v2/record/S30C2954535>). **Ages 13+**

### **"Hidden Figures ([https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4846340/?ref=mv\\_sr\\_srg\\_0](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4846340/?ref=mv_sr_srg_0))**

Another science-themed movie, "Hidden Figures" might seem like an even less obvious choice for kids. Instead of manly survival adventures and spaceship rescues, we get the story of women of color doing math and breaking glass ceilings. But a good story doesn't need action. My youngest watched it at school in 5th grade and loved it so much that they chose it when it was their turn to pick the family movie at home. **Ages 10+**

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