

FAMILY MEDIA/KIDS + MEDIA

The Best LGBTQ+ Movies and TV Shows for Families

Celebrate Pride with one of these kid-friendly LGBTQ shows

BY GEMMA ALEXANDER (/AUTHOR/GEMMA-ALEXANDER) |

PUBLISHED ON: JUNE 19, 2023



PHOTO: "Heartstopper," Season 2. Photo courtesy: Netflix

Pixar's 2020 short "Out," now streaming on Disney+, tells the story of a grown man coming out to his parents as he's about to move in with his partner. It was a huge leap for a major studio, but one that came decades late. Parents in LGBTQ+ families don't need to be told how little representation of gender and sexual diversity there is in media aimed at children.

In GLAAD's latest survey (<https://www.glaad.org/sri/2022/overview>) (from 2022) of major studio film releases, only 16 of 77 theatrically released feature films included LGBTQ+ characters; those who were included appeared in mostly minor roles, with less than five minutes of screen time. Not a single film in the kids and family genre included LGBTQ+ characters in 2022. Some YouTube channels, such as [Pop'n'Olly](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpjrLd11TqcVXag6sPSU3A) (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpjrLd11TqcVXag6sPSU3A>) and [Queer Kid Stuff](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCecsVoeJcsXbAra7SI4mOPw) (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCecsVoeJcsXbAra7SI4mOPw>), are well-known for providing age-appropriate and entertaining LGBTQ+ educational videos, but they're hardly movie-night fare for families. Fortunately, TV has experienced a boom in LGBTQ+-inclusive programming in recent years, with beloved shows such as "[The Owl House](https://www.common sense media.org/tv-reviews/the-owl-house)" (<https://www.common sense media.org/tv-reviews/the-owl-house>)" winning the Common Sense Media seal of approval, and classics such as "[Arthur](https://arthur.fandom.com/wiki/Mr._Ratburn_and_the_Special_Someone)" (https://arthur.fandom.com/wiki/Mr._Ratburn_and_the_Special_Someone)" and "[Blue's Clues](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d4vHegf3WPU)" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d4vHegf3WPU>)" presenting episodes featuring gay weddings and Pride parades.

Some wonderful movies dealing with LGBTQ+ families are rated for older audiences due to details that may bother some parents: "[The Kids Are All Right](https://www.common sense media.org/movie-reviews/the-kids-are-all-right)" (<https://www.common sense media.org/movie-reviews/the-kids-are-all-right>)" (several instances of nudity); "[The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert](https://www.common sense media.org/movie-reviews/the-adventures-of-priscilla-queen-of-the-desert)" (<https://www.common sense media.org/movie-reviews/the-adventures-of-priscilla-queen-of-the-desert>)" (what is that lady doing with the ping pong balls?) and "[The Birdcage](https://www.common sense media.org/movie-reviews/the-birdcage)" (<https://www.common sense media.org/movie-reviews/the-birdcage>)" (a home filled with phallic artwork). The excellent "[Everything Everywhere All at Once](https://www.common sense media.org/movie-reviews/everything-everywhere-all-at-once)" (<https://www.common sense media.org/movie-reviews/everything-everywhere-all-at-once>)" depicts two loving lesbian relationships, as well as a conservative mother coming to terms with her daughter's sexuality – if your kid can handle some seriously trippy metaphysics and you can get past a fight scene featuring a suggestive workplace award statuette.

The options are growing – slowly – but it still takes some digging to find truly all-ages examples LGBTQ+-inclusivity in family media. In honor of Pride Month, we've done that digging and found these LGBTQ+ media options for every family.



"Pink Boy"

SIFF-recommended short films

Our friends at the Seattle International Film Festival have recommended a few high-quality shorts:

"Tyler (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y3knga2u6o8>)" (16 mins.) – Some of the dialogue feels more like it was written by a therapist than spoken by a 9-year-old, but for kids of elementary school age (and their families), this could be a good conversation starter/coming-out instruction manual, and the relationship between the brothers is sweet.

"In a Heartbeat (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2REkk9SCRn0>)" (4 mins.) – This animated short about a boy who literally loses his heart to his crush is as touching as anything Pixar has ever made. Go ahead and watch it. Be prepared to cry.

"Pink Boy (<https://www.shortoftheweek.com/2016/09/08/pink-boy/>)" (15 mins.) – This documentary tells the story of a dress-wearing 6-year-old boy living in rural Florida and the family that creates a safe space for his sartorial choices.

"Fifteen (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gS1p-27dfKs>)" (4 mins.) – This teen-made postmortem of first love may have too much kissing for the younger kids but will hit middle-schoolers in the feels.

"Sweetheart Dancers (<https://vimeo.com/ondemand/sweetheartdancers>)" (14 mins.) – Appropriate for all ages and well worth the rental fee, this sweet documentary about an indigenous gay couple who compete in traditional dancing shows them challenging powwow rules against same-sex couples.

“[Mehndi \(https://vimeo.com/275907493\)](https://vimeo.com/275907493)” (4 mins.) – Two girls make a powerful discovery during a shared moment at a family party. There is nothing in this film that a toddler shouldn’t watch, but it contains a lot of story (and sexual tension) under the surface.

Feature films

Much like “Coraline,” “[Wendell & Wild \(https://www.commonsensemedia.org/movie-reviews/wendell-wild\)](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/movie-reviews/wendell-wild)” is an animated film that pushes kids’ boundaries with its creepiness factor. In this story about facing your literal demons, half of the characters are already dead. But it breaks right past a bunch of diversity barriers with a predominantly POC cast, and the protagonist’s ride-or-die best friend is the first trans character ever featured in a stop-motion film.

A YA retelling of Cyrano de Bergerac set in the PNW, “[The Half of It \(https://www.commonsensemedia.org/movie-reviews/the-half-of-it\)](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/movie-reviews/the-half-of-it)” (2020) features Asian honor student named Ellie who has a side hustle writing papers for her less literate classmates. Things get complicated when a boy hires her to write love letters to the same girl Ellie has a crush on.

Although the topic of this bildungsroman is heavy – homophobia at a conservative high school – “[Freak Show \(https://www.commonsensemedia.org/movie-reviews/freak-show\)](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/movie-reviews/freak-show)” (2018) deals with the topic using wit and humor.

“[Love, Simon \(https://www.commonsensemedia.org/movie-reviews/love-simon\)](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/movie-reviews/love-simon)” (2018) is the adaptation of the wildly popular YA book “[Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda \(https://www.amazon.com/Simon-vs-Homo-Sapiens-Agenda/dp/006234868X?ie=UTF8&tag=parentmap-20\)](https://www.amazon.com/Simon-vs-Homo-Sapiens-Agenda/dp/006234868X?ie=UTF8&tag=parentmap-20).” There are a lot of teen coming-out movies, but “Love, Simon” is the one least likely to shock younger siblings.

“[Bend It Like Beckham \(https://www.commonsensemedia.org/movie-reviews/bend-it-like-beckham\)](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/movie-reviews/bend-it-like-beckham)” (2002) is all about the familial generation gap. The protagonist’s desire to play soccer against her traditional Sikh parents’ wishes unfolds in parallel with her male best friend’s coming-out. The movie treats both conflicts with the same weight and validity.

Aside from a few swear words and discussion of drug use, “[Breakfast With Scot \(https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0910847/\)](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0910847/)” (2007) doesn’t really deserve its PG-13 rating. Sportscaster Eric is happily married before his husband Sam inherits custody of a relative’s stepson. When young Scot prefers musicals to hockey, Eric discovers his own toxic masculinity and internalized homophobia.



"She-Ra and the Princesses of Power"; photo courtesy of Netflix

TV shows

"The Owl House (<https://www.common sense media.org/tv-reviews/the-owl-house>)" (2020–2022) is the quirky queer magical series that every weirdo misfit needs growing up. The show hits hard at the theme of finding a place where you can be yourself from episode 1, but overt LGBTQ+ representation is limited to one character's dads in season one. Season 2, on the other hand, sees teen girls embark on a wholesome, age-appropriate dating relationship, and introduces a nonbinary adult character. Bonus points for giving the main character's mom her own story arc. Without ever questioning that she acts from a place of love, this single mom of color faces her own history of bullying as well as current social and financial pressures. She grows from a mindset of changing her child to fit the world to changing the world to fit her child. Chef's kiss!

"Kipo and the Age of the Wonderbeasts (<https://www.common sense media.org/tv-reviews/kipo-and-the-age-of-wonderbeasts>)" (2020) has a fairly traditional plot but it makes history for representation. A young person making friends and having adventures in a strange land while trying to find their way home, protagonist Kipo's friends number at least one nonbinary character and another who rejects Kipo's crush with the history-making statement, "I'm gay," the first time those words were said in children's television.

Ongoing series "Heartstopper (<https://www.common sense media.org/tv-reviews/heartstopper>)" is a sweet live-action show based on a graphic novel series that follows two boys through high school. Gay Charlie is out and recovering from being bullied about it; Nick is figuring out his bisexuality as his feelings for Charlie develop; and the responses to the boys from their families and diverse friend groups fall everywhere on the spectrum from supportive to punch-worthy.

Television drama “[The Fosters](https://www.common sense media.org/tv-reviews/the-fosters)” (2013–2018) follows the blended, multiracial family of a lesbian couple. The challenges they face are realistic for the ages of the children portrayed (12–16 when the series starts), but the overall vibe is more down-to-earth than cringey.

“[Diary of a Future President](https://www.common sense media.org/tv-reviews/diary-of-a-future-president)” (2020–2021), on Disney+, focuses on 12-year-old Cuban-American Elena, who is preparing for her future as President of the United States. Amid all the other tween drama, her older brother develops a crush on his friend Liam. There is also one lesbian adult character – the paralegal who works for Elena’s mother.

Cartoon Network leads the pack with several shows featuring same-sex relationships between major characters. Both a TV show and a movie, the kid-friendly “[Steven Universe](https://www.common sense media.org/search/steven-universe)” (2013–2019) is filled with queer characters (albeit nonhuman alien gems). Although the animation style is decidedly low-budget, the stories handle heavy subjects with a sensitive touch.

Parents may remember “She-Ra” as an absolutely awful spin-off series from the late ‘80s designed to sell toys. But the reboot “[She-Ra and the Princesses of Power](https://www.common sense media.org/tv-reviews/she-ra-and-the-princesses-of-power)” (2018–2020) was a surprisingly intelligent and entertaining feminist story with three-dimensional characters. Some of those characters were nonbinary, others were in a lesbian relationship. Alas, it also fell prey to the final-episode queer love declaration trope that quickly wore on the patience of audiences hungry for positive representation throughout the run of their favorite shows.

In the long-running Japanese “Sailor Moon” manga, it’s canon that Sailors Uranus and Neptune are a couple, but early American releases recast them as cousins. Today, the rebooted series “[Sailor Moon Crystal](https://www.common sense media.org/tv-reviews/sailor-moon-crystal)” (2014) gets the couple back together.

A more recent rerelease of a magical girl anime classic for younger viewers, “[Cardcaptor Sakura](https://www.common sense media.org/tv-reviews/cardcaptor-sakura)” (2020) on Netflix is more faithful to the Japanese original than earlier American dubs. The show about a fourth-grader collecting magical cards has same-sex romantic crush subplots, and an older brother with a boyfriend. The 2018 series “[Cardcaptor Sakura: Clear Card](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt6279576/?ref_=ttpl_pl_tt)” is still available on Crunchyroll, but does not have the same level of representation.

Truly for little kids, “[Danger and Eggs](https://www.common sense media.org/tv-reviews/danger-eggs)” (2015–) pairs daredevil D.D. Danger and their safety-conscious best friend, an egg named Phillip, in all kinds of outrageous adventures. It’s a buddy

show in a world casually populated with numerous queer characters (often voiced by queer actors).

Reel Queer Youth

When you can't find what you need in the arts, it's time to make it yourself. [Three Dollar Bill Cinema](https://threedollarbillcinema.org/reelqueeryouth) (<https://threedollarbillcinema.org/reelqueeryouth>) offers a video production and media literacy program for LGBTQ+ youths and allies in grades 9–12. During this weeklong camp (virtual and in person), teens explore queer cinema, and create a film with whatever media and tools they have available.

STAY CONNECTED!

Get the best of ParentMap delivered right to your inbox.

READ NEXT



5 Ways to Bring Rules Back After Summer
(</article/5-ways-bring-rules-back-after-summer>)

(</article/5-ways-bring-rules-back-after-summer>)



Drag Story Time (</article/drag-story-time-near-me>)

(</article/drag-story-time-near-me>)



New Shows on Netflix and Disney+ in June 2023
(</article/new-shows-netflix-and-disney-june-2023>)

(</article/new-shows-netflix-and-disney-june-2023>)

RELATED TOPICS

[FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT \(/TAXONOMY/TERM/409\)](/taxonomy/term/409)

[FILMS/MOVIES \(/TAXONOMY/TERM/685\)](/taxonomy/term/685)

[LGBTQ \(/TAXONOMY/TERM/457\)](/taxonomy/term/457)