

FAMILY MEDIA/MOVIES

Beloved Oscar-Winning Films to Watch With Kids

Turn back the clock and pass the popcorn! These classics stand the test of time

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Every year, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences bestows Oscar awards for two dozen different categories, but viewers are most interested in the award for best picture (<https://www.imdb.com/list/ls009480135/>). Family-friendly movies like “Wicked” are often nominated but rarely win. But in the past 96 years, the Oscar has gone to a few gems that families can still enjoy watching together. If you can’t find them streaming, Scarecrow Video (<https://scarecrowvideo.org/>) has them all (and the devices to play them on).

**“It Happened One Night ([A classic movie poster for the film 'It Happened One Night'. The poster features Clark Gable on the left, wearing a dark suit, a white shirt, a dark tie, and a fedora hat. He is looking towards Claudette Colbert on the right. She is wearing a blue and white striped dress. The background is a dark blue night sky with a full moon and silhouettes of trees. The title 'IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT' is written in a stylized, yellow, outlined font at the top of the poster.](https://www.amazon.com/Happened-One-Night-Clark-Gable/dp/B000MDJH7W/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&tag=parentmap-20”),”</u>
1934</p></div><div data-bbox=)**

Claudette Colbert and Clark Gable are the wisecracking stars in this whip-smart comedy about a cynical reporter who hits the road with a runaway heiress. Younger kids may not be able to keep up with the snappy banter, but older kids will love it. It was the first film to win all five major categories: best picture, best director, best actor, best actress and best screenplay.

“Rebecca (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YlfrHoTL9dE),” 1940



While “North by Northwest” is probably the best movie for introducing kids to the thrill of Alfred Hitchcock’s suspense movies, “Rebecca” is the one with an Academy Award. Starring Laurence Olivier and Joan Fontaine, this adaptation of Daphne du Maurier’s Gothic romance isn’t appropriate for the youngest viewers, but tweens and teens will appreciate how much tension and melodrama Hitchcock created in an era when on-screen sex and violence were banned. Nominations: 11. Wins: 2.

“Casablanca (https://www.amazon.com/Casablanca-Humphrey-Bogart/dp/B0091W0JPE/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&tag=parentmap-20),” 1943



Even if you don’t pause repeatedly to explain geopolitics in the years before the U.S. joined World War II, kids can enjoy one of the greatest movies of all time, with Bogart and Bacall’s magical chemistry, Peter Lorre’s role as a shifty black marketeer, and the hopeful refugees as they practice English (“What watch?”). Older kids can

also explore the acres of moral gray area occupied by nearly every character in the movie. Nominations: 8. Wins: 3.

"All About Eve (https://www.amazon.com/All-About-Eve-Bette-Davis/dp/B008Q0C1DU/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&tag=parentmap-20)," 1950



Move over, "Mean Girls." High school cliques can't hold a candle to the social power struggle between Bette Davis' hysterical diva and Anne Baxter's sweetly conniving ingenue, but kids might be closer than adults to the heart of this story, which challenges viewers to decide who's really the bully and who is hiding behind a mask. Nominations: 14. Wins: 6.

"West Side Story (https://www.amazon.com/West-Side-Story-Natalie-Wood/dp/B008PEXCBM/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&tag=parentmap-20)," 1961



Looking for a movie that can introduce your first-grader to Shakespeare, Stephen Sondheim and choreographer Jerome Robbins, as well as the incredible Natalie Wood and oft-overlooked Rita Moreno, in one tidy cinematic package? “West Side Story” can do all that, and it’s got earworms to last a lifetime. Just be prepared to talk about the unfortunate stereotyping (<https://www.parentmap.com/article/watch-out-classic-movies-racial-stereotypes>) that comes with fake accents and racial miscasting. Nominations: 11. Wins: 10.

“My Fair Lady (https://www.amazon.com/My-Fair-Lady-Audrey-Hepburn/dp/B08NDY3NRQ/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&tag=parentmap-20),”
1964



It’s kind of a mystery why this bloated all-ages movie with its forgettable songs swept the Oscars in 1964. But the costumes are incredible, and every child deserves to know Audrey Hepburn, who is as charming and delightful here as anywhere. But feel free to watch “Roman Holiday” instead — it didn’t win an Oscar, but it’s a better movie. Nominations: 12. Wins: 8, including costume design.

“The Sound of Music (https://www.amazon.com/Sound-Music-Julie-Andrews/dp/B0C17FRGFC/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&tag=parentmap-20),”
1965



One of the last great Technicolor musicals, this all-ages Rodgers and Hammerstein story about a winsome nanny who heals a grieving family makes it easy to forget that the real action of the plot involves fleeing the Nazis. But 80 years after the liberation of Auschwitz, it's still important to remember the dangers of authoritarian regimes, and there's no gentler way to introduce children to a painful moment of history than with "The Sound of Music." Nominations:10. Wins: 5.

“Oliver! (https://www.amazon.com/Oliver-Ron-Moody/dp/B001IWUZYK/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&tag=parentmap-20),” 1968



The only G-rated movie to ever win best picture, “Oliver!” is the musical adaptation of Charles Dickens’ novel “Oliver Twist.” Even if you don’t think you’ve seen it before, the phrase “Please, sir, can I have some more?” probably rings a bell, and your kids will be singing “Food, Glorious Food” for weeks. Nominations: 11. Wins: 5, plus an honorary award for choreography.

Bonus: “The Wizard of Oz (https://www.amazon.com/Wizard-Oz-Judy-Garland/dp/B0B6Q9V9H8/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&tag=parentmap-20),” 1939



It didn’t win best picture, but how could we ignore “The Wizard of Oz,” especially with “Wicked” nominated this year? If your kids are new to classic movies, you have to start with this all-ages classic. Nominations: 6, including best picture. Wins: 2, including best original song (“Over the Rainbow”) and best original score.

Note: For old movies, you can't rely on ratings

(https://www.filmratings.com/Content/Downloads/130208_ratings-timeline.final.pdf); the modern system has evolved since it was established in 1968. From the '30s through the '60s, films were self-censored according to the Hays Code (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hays_Code), which banned sexual imagery and swear words, but permitted racial stereotypes and other contemporary taboos.

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