



Movies That Bring Awareness or May Prompt a Discussion About Bullying

Suggested Movies for Older Children

Bully (2011) 12+

As far as bullying movies go, this is definitely one of the most heart-wrenching. This documentary follows 4 kids in school and on the bus who are bullied. It opens with a Father talking about his son who committed suicide because he was bullied. One of the Principals is even caught on camera simply telling the kids to get to class when he witnessed bullying. Given the intense subject matter, I suggest watching this one with your older teenagers. **It's definitely too much for younger kids.**

The Fat Boy Chronicles (2010) 12+

As if being overweight wasn't enough, Jimmy Winterpock is a Freshman who is bullied, mostly by the football team. Of course, there is a love interest in the story. He befriends a girl, who he learns is cutting herself. They soon start to go to church together. He starts to run with Dad, wanting to lose weight. Still dealing with taunts because is 5'5" and 188 pounds, he starts to tutor the captain of the football team.

Cyber Bully (2011)

After her Brother hacks into her social media account and posts negative messages, Taylor becomes a victim of online bullying from her high school peers. Taylor is bombarded with hateful messages, her friends alienate her and nasty rumours are spread about her promiscuity. With all of the online and offline abuse, Taylor suffers from depression, which leads to her posting an online video saying she could no longer live with herself.

In a deeply emotional scene, Samantha, Taylor's best friend, rushes to Taylor's house and stops her from overdosing from a bottle of pills. After Taylor receives help from a support group, her Mum Kris fights for legislature against cyberbullying, and wins. Online bullying has a devastating effect on teens; it causes emotional, physical and psychological stress, leading them to depression, low-self-esteem, anxiety and thoughts of suicide. This movie demonstrates the importance of a strong support system and how to start a conversation about bullying (especially with older children).



13 Reasons Why (TV Series 2017-2020) 15+

15

While this is a series rather than a movie, it's definitely something you'll want to watch together with your teens (versus just letting them watch it on their own). '13 Reasons Why' has received extremely mixed reviews, with some experts calling it a great way to open the discussion about teenage suicide and others hailing it as dangerous. This is definitely one of those bullying movies that you really have to decide for yourself if its appropriate for your teen.

A Girl Like Her (2015)

This is one of the newer bullying movies on Netflix. It focuses on the story of a bullied girl who attempts suicide and what her attempt does to her community. Her school was chosen to be part of a documentary of the top schools in the country and when the cameras start rolling, the truth starts coming out.

Wonder (2017)

Unlike most movies about bullying, 'Wonder' takes an inspirational tone to the phenomenon. This insanely uplifting film features the true story of a boy who was born with a very rare facial deformity, how he overcame the cruelty of bullies at school, and how he helped the world be a better place.

This film will bring you to tears. It won a Humanitarian Award and is now one of the most critically acclaimed films in recent years. You need to see this.

Billy Elliot (2000)

The movie follows the journey of 11-year-old Billy, a boy who has to deal with the stereotypes of wanting to be a dancer. He has to deal with his Father's 'manly man' attitude and his Brother's constant bullying. It teaches kids about acceptance of both others and themselves.



The Karate Kid (1984) 12A

“The Karate Kid” follows the story of a teen who moves from New Jersey to LA, only to be met with an angry and jealous school bully. He is taught the ancient art of karate as means to defend himself, then ends up competing against his bully in a tournament.

The film teaches us that we shouldn't be scared and that there is more than one way to fight back.

Being the new kid in a Southern California town, 14-year-old Daniel becomes a red-hot target of a group of bullies who study karate at the Cobra Kai dojo. At school, Daniel grows close with Ali Mills, an attractive cheerleader, which grabs the attention of her arrogant ex-boyfriend, Johnny Lawrence, who is also a skilled practitioner of the unethical and dangerous form of karate. Johnny and his gang torment Daniel and continuously beat him up, until Kesuke Miyagi, the handyman at Daniel's apartment, intervenes and single-handedly defeats all five bullies in the famous Halloween fight scene.

Mr. Miyagi then trains Daniel in karate, but more importantly, he teaches him how to be mentally strong. The movie shows how martial arts can fuel self-confidence, an essential trait for children coping with bullying. Aside from self-defence, martial arts also teaches kids other skills: communication and handling stressful situations.

Mean Girls (2004) 12A

When teenage girls and high school are put together, drama is almost always the end result. This comedy highlights the hierarchy of popular girls in school, and the emotional roller coaster that comes with it. Regina George and The Plastics befriend the new girl Cady, showing her the ropes of North Shore High School along the way. In the movie, Regina tries to pin her friends against each other in a notorious three-way phone call — remember those?

The movie shares a few important messages: Being true to ones self can make someone happier versus pretending to be someone else, and judging people based on their appearance isn't right. The film also illustrates how bullies can manipulate their friends through mind games, exclusion and by controlling their actions — yikes!

Back to the Future (1985) PG

In this classic film, Marty McFly accidentally travels back in time to the date when his parents first met in high school in 1955. Marty discovers that his Father George is a timid, smart and nerdy teen who seems invisible to his Mother Lorraine, a wildly popular beauty. George is bullied and terrorized by Biff Tannen, a towering, violent brute. To avoid getting punched, George does Biff's homework — until he snaps.

At the school dance, Biff forces himself onto Lorraine in the school parking lot and that's when George steps in. Growing so angry, he finds the strength to punch Biff in the face, which subsequently ends the bullying. Now, violence may not be the best answer; however, the lesson here is an old-fashioned one: Stand up to a bully, and they'll disappear.



Harry Potter (2001)

Before attending Hogwarts, 11-year-old Harry Potter is bullied and tormented by his own family — Uncle Vernon, Aunt Petunia and his cousin Dudley — when he isn't being stuffed into the cupboard under the stairs. Upon arrival at the school of magic, the young wizard continues to face bullies, especially Draco Malfoy, who always tries to get Harry in trouble. The bad blood between the two wizards begins on the train to Hogwarts after Draco offers Harry the chance to hang with the 'right crowd', only steering Harry further away.

Although Harry perseveres with Draco's harassment, he never gives up and he makes a close group of friends and learns how to stand up for himself. This movie is a great example of teaching children resilience and the importance of making loyal friends, just like Ron and Hermione.

The Princess Diaries (2001)

Just before her 16th birthday, Mia Thermopolis' world turns upside down when she learns she is a princess and the rightful heir to the Genovian throne. Mia's untamed, frizzy head of hair and thick-rimmed glasses make her an easy target for bullying not only at school, but from her Grandmother Clarisse, the queen of Genovia. In an effort to make her princess material, Mia's Grandmother gives her a makeover from head to toe, breaking a brush in the process!

After popping in contacts, straightening out her hair and learning a few rules of etiquette, Mia wins the affection of her former bullies and her Grandmother, but loses her close friends in the process. She quickly realizes that it doesn't matter what other people think of her and that she shouldn't change herself just to please others — a good lesson for children of all ages.

Forrest Gump (1994)

From a young age, Forrest Gump is constantly bullied for his physical disability and low intelligence. Forrest's curved spine requires him to wear leg braces, making him unable to walk properly. One day, when Forrest is running away from bullies chasing him, his leg braces break away, revealing that he is not only able to run... but run fast! To this day, Jenny's famous words, "Run, Forrest, run!" are an iconic set that everyone recognises.

Forrest uses his talent and lands a football scholarship to the University of Alabama, becoming a top running back. Forrest's lively energy and kindred spirit take him many other places in the film, from meeting President John F. Kennedy and joining the army, to owning shrimping boats and endorsing a ping-pong paddle business. Moral of the story? Anyone, despite any disabilities they may have, can achieve their dreams.



A Cinderella Story (2004)

A day doesn't go by when Sam isn't bullied. After losing her Mother and Father, she is left to live with her 'evil' Stepmother and Stepsisters, while being bossed around in the process. At school, Sam is bullied by the popular squad and is often called the 'Diner Girl'. A few times, the group bullies Sam at the diner she works at, hinting that serving is all she will amount to.

Sam confides in her online pen pal, 'Nomad', about her college dreams and the emotional abuse she suffers at home and at school. She ends up falling in love with him, who turns out to be Austin Ames, the high school's popular, yet unhappy, quarterback. This movie is a modern spin on the classic 'Cinderella' fairytale, but it still includes the same profound message as the original: the importance of true love, noble character and courage.

Suggested Movies for Younger Children

Hercules (1997)

The son of Zeus, he is born with tremendous strength. Family drama unfolds and it is revealed that in 18 years when the planets are in the right alignment, it will allow Hades (Brother of Zeus) to locate and free the Titans (who have been imprisoned at the bottom of the ocean). Only Hercules has the power to stop him. Hades has him kidnapped and fed a formula that is meant to make him mortal, so he would lose the power to stop him. However, the 2 who kidnapped him neglected to take away his superhuman power before he was found and adopted by a farmer family. When Hercules becomes a teenager and goes to school with all the other kids, he is made fun of and becomes an outcast because of his strength. And then begins the quest for where he came from.

Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius (2001)

A boy inventor accidentally starts a fire with one of his inventions and is sent to his room. He decides to sneak out and meet his friends at the park without his parents knowing. Meanwhile all the parents in town are being abducted by the Yolkians, an alien species from the planet Yolkus. Jimmy (with help from his friends) saves the town's parents from being abducted and taken away. It shows how he rallied his friends and stood up to the alien bullies who took the parents away!



The Ant Bully (2006)

This one is a known favourite for younger kids. It does a great job of demonstrating the chain reaction that bullying can have. The main human character, Lucas, is having a rough time. He's neglected by his family and bullied by a bigger kid. In turn, he takes out his frustrations on an ant hill, becoming the titular 'Ant Bully'. When he's magically turned into the same size as the ants though, he learns not only how his actions hurt them, but also how to have more confidence in himself and stand up to his own bully.

Chicken Little (2005)

Chicken Little is a familiar story: a tale about courage and the importance of a strong community. Chicken Little thinks the sky is falling, so he rings the town bell in distress, only to be proven wrong and as a result, becomes the joke of his community. Embarrassed, Chicken Little's Father encourages him to lay low. Sad and devastated, Chicken Little tries out for the baseball team to fix his reputation and more importantly, win his Father's approval.

After he makes the team and impresses his Father, an actual piece of the sky falls on Chicken Little's head, which turns out to be an alien scheme. Chicken Little ends up saving the town and in the end everyone is grateful for his bravery. The movie provides a great opportunity for families to discuss themes like trust and unconditional love.

Wreck-It Ralph (2012)

Set in a fictional world where video game characters interact with each other when they are not being played, this film follows the 'Ralph' as he tries to gain status among his digital peers. Along the way he encounters a young, female character named Vanellope Von Schweetz, who is from the candy-based racing game 'Sugar Rush'. Von Schweetz is known to her peers as 'The Glitch', because she is afflicted with a condition called 'pixlexia', a computer coding error that causes her to twitch and briefly disappear. Von Schweetz wants nothing more than to be a driver in one of her game's official races. She even builds her own vehicle in an effort to accomplish her goal. She is then confronted by Taffyta Muttonfudge, the best racer in the game and the other drivers. They torment her, calling her "an accident waiting to happen". Then they destroy her vehicle to prevent her from racing, before tossing her in a mud pit. It isn't until after a series of adventures and a lot of support and coaching from Ralph that Von Schweetz finally gets to race and dramatically crosses the finish line. At this point the game resets, and it is revealed that Von Schweetz is actually a princess and the rightful ruler of the 'Sugar Rush' kingdom. All of the game's characters are discovered to have had their memories erased by the villain Turbo, which is why they did not know Von Schweetz's real identity. Now, fully aware of the past, they embrace her as their monarch.

ONE KIND WORD

Anti-Bullying Week -15 to 19 November 2021



Zootopia (Zootropolis) - (2016)

Even though this world is completely filled with animals, it shares a couple of controversial themes in today's society: racial and gender discrimination. Judy Hopps fulfils her childhood dream of becoming a police officer in the urban city of Zootopia; however, she's instantly sent to parking duty because her chief doubts her abilities, all because she is a rabbit.

Judy is determined to prove herself, so she immediately jumps into a mysterious case on her first day, which means partnering with scam-artist fox, Nick Wilde. The duo work together to crack the case, with a few bumps and adventures along the way. The ultimate lesson in this movie is to never judge a book by its cover (or an animal by its ancestral background) — in Zootopia, it doesn't matter if one's family was historically a prey or predator, everyone is equal.



UNITED AGAINST BULLYING