

## FilmValues.com announces top ten family-friendly films

With the end of the year approaching rapidly, we are flooded with "Top 10" movie lists, often with a lot of foreign and independent films that many people have never heard of. Here's a list that is useful — the Top 10 Family-Friendly Films from America's fastest growing parenting website, www.FilmValues.com

Dr. H. Arthur Tausig, Ph.D., the driving force behind FilmValues.com invites parents to read the complete reviews on his website. "I realize parents are busy," he says "so the reviews are short and easy to read, with lots of the information about sexuality, violence, language, blood, etc. in easy-to-read labels."

"Picking ten films was tough," says Tausig. "Unlike what most film critics say about Hollywood, there were a large number of films with good messages for children. Of course, these often have to be weighed against bad messages. The films were selected by balancing the good and the bad, the overall entertainment value, and the breadth of the age group that could watch the films."

"The pickings were so good, in fact, that Tausig has posted a Top 20 list on his information-packed website, www.FilmValues.com. Rest assured that Dr. Tausig has identified the messages these films send to children, despite the rather eclectic nature of the list."

On his popular (over two million visits), multiple award winning website, www.FilmValues.com, Tausig offers almost 1000 evaluations of current and classic films appearing on the big screen, network TV, cable and video rental. The reviews are without political, religious or social bias. With this information parents can now make sensible decisions about what their kids should and should not be watching. Parents will find films for kids of all ages from *Barnes, Pippin*, and *Thomas* all the way to *Fulp Fiction*, *Matrix* and *There's Something About Mary*.

Dr. H. Arthur Tausig, Ph.D. evaluates each film in over twenty content categories of concern to parents including: Age Recommendation, Plot Summary, Substance Use, Violence/Scarcity, Morals, Issues & Values, Crimes (and whether they are punished or not), Sexuality and Gender Issues, Alternate Film Recommendations, Nudity, Sexuality, Physical Violence, Emotional Stress, Blood or Gore, Language and Profanity, Immorality, Degree of Parental Guidance, Watchability for Adults, and an overall Rating for Kids of the Appropriate Age. Films from books are marked to encourage kids to read. He also distinguishes between profanity and vulgarity.

With this information, according to Dr. Tausig, parents can decide with confidence what is appropriate for their children. "Each family is different, and as every parent knows, so is every child," says Tausig, "thus

the usual G, PG and PG-13 ratings are not very helpful. Rather than depending on some outside organization, parents can now get the information they need to make decisions for their own families."

"These reviews do not replace newspaper and magazine reviews, but supplement them. 'Everyone should read both,'" says Tausig. "Newspaper and magazine reviews deal with the artistic merits while I point out the messages — good or bad — kids get from films. Parents need to know about both before deciding what to see."

In addition to the excellent reviews, www.FilmValues.com offers many unique features:

- Tausig focuses on what most popular reviewers avoid: moral and ethical issues, gender issues, religious messages, means of conflict resolution, and other messages parents rarely care about.

- His reviews contain "spoilers," that is, twists and surprise endings, because these often contain issues that are of great concern to parents.

- Since kids see more films on TV than on the big screen, the site contains hundreds of films playing on cable and TV. There is even a handy daily TV movie guide of reviewed films with over 50 to 60 listings per day.

- The website contains many reviews of Made-for-TV and Direct-to-Video films in motion. Tausig is one of the few reviewers who evaluate Anime — the often violent and sex-filled Japanese animation so popular with teens and college students.

- To help parents decide on video rentals, Tausig is particularly proud of what he calls a "negative search option." Parents often ask if I know which films have the least violence or sex, or whatever. Now, with www.FilmValues.com parents can choose the type of film they are looking for, fill in the age of their child and then indicate what they want the LEAST of in a film — sex, violence, language, immorality, etc. — and get several useful recommendations."

Parents can also request specific children's films to be reviewed.

FilmValues.com takes no advertising since today almost every political advertiser is somehow connected to the movie business. Free subscriptions deliver new reviews by e-mail.

The author, Dr. H. Arthur Tausig, Ph.D., prepares each review. A recognized expert on the psychology and sociology of popular film, he has had over 200 articles published internationally. Dr. Tausig is Professor of Film and Photography and Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa, California, teaches for the University of California, Irvine, and is Adjunct Curator of Film at the Orange County Museum of Art. He holds degree from UC Berkeley and UCLA. He

has taught contemporary film for over twenty years and conducted many film workshops for parents. He is the author of the highly acclaimed "Film Values/Family Values - A Parents' Guide to Children's Films."

This year's list (in order of age range, not quality) is:

**Chicken Run** \*\*\*\*. 5 and up. Animated adventure. Good Points: Spectacular animation. Parable for the importance of personal freedom and self-reliance. Shows the best qualities of human beings. Bad Points: The film becomes rather dull at times.

**Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas** \*\*\*\*. 5 and up. Christmas Fantasy. Good Points: Anti-materialism spiritually of Christmas, family cooperation, non-violent problem solving. Bad Points: The Grinch might occasionally scare, the very young.

**Fantasia 2000** \*\*\*\*. 5 and up. Musical Animation. Good Points: Beautiful animation and music. Overcoming physical handicaps. Great Entertainment. Bad Points: Donald Duck as the biblical Noah.

**The Emperor's New Groove** \*\*\*\*. 5 and up. Animated Adventure/Comedy. Good Points: Friendship and self-sacrifice are rewarded. Egotism can be overcome. Very entertaining. Bad Points: Meso-American locale but not Meso-American culture.

**Flinstones in Viva Rock Vegas** \*\*\*\*. 5 and up. Comedy Fantasy. Good Points: A loving relation as a life goal generously to others, strong friendships. Great Fantasy — Bad

Points: Momentary addiction to gambling. Sentility used for laughs.

**Fractus** \*\*\*\*. 5 to 10. Animated Fantasy. Good Points: Honesty, duty, responsibility and friendship solve problems; visually inventive; traditional fairy tale ideas. Bad Points: Kidnapping as part of the solution.

**Dinosaur** \*\*\*\*. 6 and up. Animated Adventure. Good Points: Adoption Cooperation among young and old emphasized over survival of the fittest. Promotes racial tolerance, compassion, perseverance and forgiveness. Bad Points: Intense, but short lights, realistic disaster. Racial intolerance (of carnivores).

**My Dog Skip** \*\*\*\*. 8 and up. Animal Drama. Good Points: Boy learns self-confidence and responsibility. Learning to be an adult. Bad points: the dog dies.

**Frequency** \*\*\*\*. 13 and up. Science Fiction Drama. Good Points: Healing of father/son relations. One can better one's life. Father quits smoking and lives longer. Altruistic police, nurses and firemen. Bad Points: Death of parents. Several intense violent confrontations.

**Men of Honor** \*\*\*\*. 15 and up. Drama/Biography. Good Points: Overcoming handicaps and racism. Achieving goals. Shows importance of education, persistence and honor. Problem solving without violence.

**Bad Points:** Considerable bad language. A man's leg is amputated. Military leaders are prejudiced. R-rating.

## Kosair Children's Hospital offers tips on giving toys

This holiday season, before you give a toy to a child, you may want to make sure it's appropriate. Toys and games provide many opportunities for children to learn and grow — physically, mentally and socially.

"Younger children can get frustrated by playing with toys and games that are not suited to their physical or mental capabilities," said Erika Kravac, R.N., Children's Hospital Foundation Office of Child Advocacy of Kosair Children's Hospital. "These are guidelines found on packages really are helpful."

When purchasing toys and games for your child, remember they should be:

- appealing and interesting to the child
- suited to the child's physical abilities
- suited to the child's mental and social development
- well-constructed, durable and safe for the child's age

In general, most toys and games on the market today are safe. However, manufacturer safety standards are voluntary and you can never be completely sure they are being followed. Injuries can still occur despite government regulations and toy makers' best efforts to test products.

The following is a list of toys that the Children's Hospital Foundation Office of Child Advocacy of Kosair Children's Hospital, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Consumer Product Safety Commission recommend for specific age groups. Remember, however, that these are merely guidelines and parents should watch for mislabeled toys and always provide supervision for younger children.

**For All Ages**

- Look for end read age and safety labels on toys.
- Explain and/or show children how to use toys properly and safely.
- Keep toys intended for older children away from younger children.

- Check all toys periodically for breakage and potential hazards.
- Store toys safely — teach children to put toys away so they are not tripping hazards, and check toy boxes and shelves for safety.
- Newborn to 1-Year-Old — Choose "eye-catching" toys that appeal to a baby's sight, hearing and touch, such as:

- Large plastic blocks and soft cloth blocks, pots and pans, rattles and teething, soft, washable animals, dolls or balls with painted or stitched-on eyes, nose, etc., and molded (not loose) hair, bright, movable objects suspended out of baby's reach, busy boards, activity blocks and cubes, floating bath toys, squeeze toys and roly-poly toys.

- 1-to 2-Year-Olds — Toys for this age group need to withstand a toddler's curious nature, such as: Cloth, plastic or board books with large pictures, sturdy dolls, wooden or large hollow plastic blocks, ride-on toys propelled by pushing with feet (no pedals or steering), musical toys, nesting blocks, push and pull toys (remember — no long strings), stacking toys, toy telephones, soft, lightweight balls, toys with noise and action effects, large crayons and sturdy, large-size paper.

- 2- to 5-Year Olds — Toys for this age group are usually experimental and should imitate activities of parents and older children, such as:

- Books (short or stuffed), blackboard and chalk, building blocks, crayons, non-toxic finger paints, markers and clay, large tools and fix-a-plate sets, realistic dolls with accessories, music box toys, housekeeping

- As Kentucky's only freestanding, full-service hospital, affiliated exclusively to caring for children, adolescents and young adults, Kosair Children's Hospital has a strong commitment to the health and safety of all children. For more information on toy safety or to inquire about free fact sheets on a variety of health and safety subjects, call 502.62.8105 or 1-800-852-1770 or visit our website at [www.kosairchildrens.com](http://www.kosairchildrens.com)

- Computer and video games, construction sets with complex parts, models, sewing, needlework, musical instruments, games requiring speed, dexterity, competition and concentration, two-wheeled bicycle and helmet, microscopes, telescopes, remote control toys, books, audio/visual equipment, and sports equipment with safety gear, hobby collections.

- Truss Plant Opening January 2001

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**Season's Greetings**

As we celebrate the Christmas season, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for your friendship and kindness.

My deputies and I wish each and everyone a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. May your days be filled with joy, happiness and the best of health.

**Season's Greetings**  
from  
**County Clerk Norma Houk**  
and Deputies Tina Gibbs, Amy Price, Becky Smith, Sonya McGuire and Janet Burdine

Closed December 22nd at noon through December 25th and January 1st and 2nd