

# 5 CHILDREN'S MOVIES

## To Stream Now

### You Are So Not Invited to My Bat Mitzvah

Playing a father who's befuddled by his teenage daughters, Adam Sandler is light-years from the neurotic jeweler with a gambling addiction he played in "Uncut Gems." Tween girls with overprotective dads might recognize his portrayal of Danny Friedman, a guy who helplessly watches his 13-year-old daughter Stacy (played by Sandler's real-life daughter Sunny Sandler) seek to finally become popular by having a banger of a bat mitzvah. This is a family affair for the Sandler clan: His wife, Jackie, is in the film, as is his older daughter, Sadie. Idina Menzel plays Danny's wife, Bree. The story is based on a 2005 novel by Fiona Rosenbloom about the friendship between Stacy and her BFF, Lydia (Samantha Lorraine), and what happens when that friendship unravels (because of a cute boy, of course). Directed by Sammi Cohen (Hulu's "Crush") and written by Alison Peck ("UglyDolls"), it's a charmer about friendship, family and the drama (and comedy) that goes along with growing up.



### Casts

Director: Sammi Cohen  
Writers: Alison Peck,  
Fiona Rosenbloom  
Stars: Idina Menzel,  
Jackie Sandler, Adam  
Sandler

### Currently on Netflix

#### Upcoming Movies

### Movie List

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COMING SOON



«All the News  
that's Fit to  
Print»

TOP CHOICE: ELEMENTAL!

Watch it on Disney+

The concept of star-crossed lovers takes on new meaning in this Pixar creation about a fiery lass (literally) named Ember Lumen (voiced by Leah Lewis) who meets Wade Ripple (Mamoudou Athie), an emotional softy made of water. They live in Element City, a place where fire, earth, air and water reside despite being divided into four socioeconomic classes — each taught to stick to its own kind. When Ember and Wade start to fall in love, she does everything in her power to keep her distance. It doesn't help that her proud father, Bernie (Ronnie del Carmen), strives to keep his daughter away from Wade. At first glance, the character animation might appear off-putting or even, dare I say, ugly. But once the story gets going,



children should be swept up in the visual world created by the director Peter Sohn and his team. The script — by Brenda Hsueh, John Hoberg and Kat Likkel — plays out like any good romantic comedy should: You root for Ember and Wade to ignore the naysayers and risk it all for love. During his second viewing of the film, my headphone-wearing son screamed, “This is my favorite movie!” That’s coming from a kid who is typically more into ninjas fighting than rom-coms

Casts

Director: Peter Sohn  
Writers: John Hoberg, Kat Likkel, Brenda Hsueh  
Stars: Leah Lewis, Mamoudou Athie, Ronnie Del Carmen

Casts

Director: Robert Rodriguez  
Writers: Robert Rodriguez, Racer Rodriguez  
Stars: Connor Esterson, Everly Carganilla, Zachary Levi

Watch it on  
Netflix

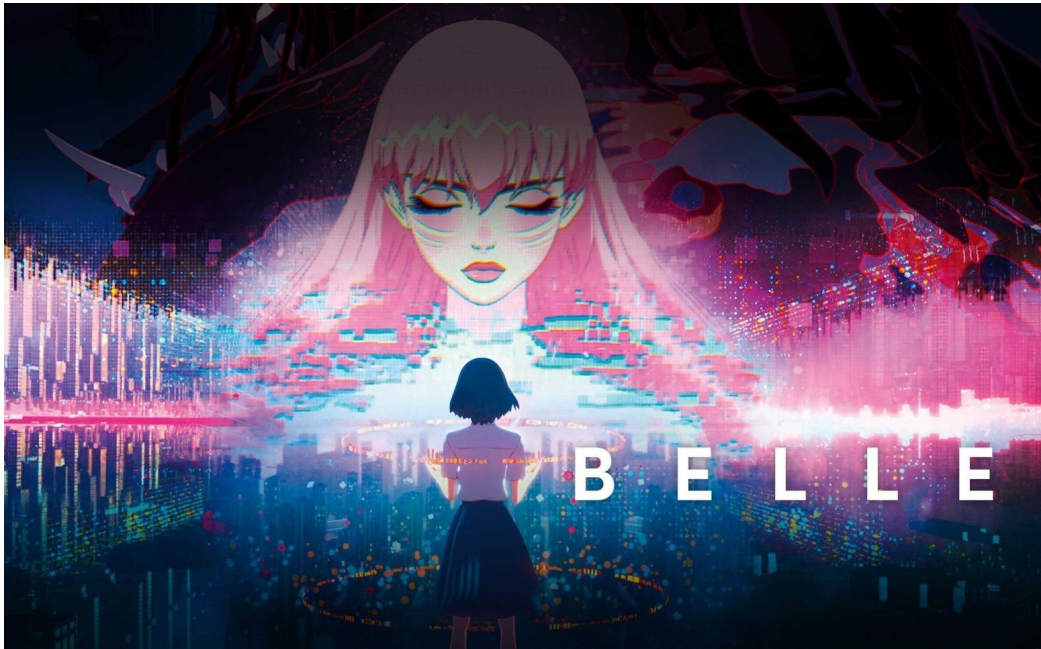
After writing and directing the first four “Spy Kids” movies, which began in 2001, Robert Rodriguez returns with this reboot of the franchise for a new generation. For “Spy Kids: Armageddon,” he shares the writing and producing credit with his son Racer to tell the story of Tony (Connor Esterson) and Patty (Everly Carganilla), young siblings whose parents are James Bond-level secret agents, played by Gina Rodriguez and Zachary Levi. When an evil video game developer, Rey “The King” Kingston (Billy Magnussen), unleashes a virus that gives him the power to take over the world, Tony and Patty have to save their mom and dad — and the universe. The kids have a field day exploring a “safe house” full of spy suits and cool gadgets that many elementary-age children will pine for. There are plenty of generational jokes about the youngsters knowing more than their parents (at least when it comes to video games), and the action and quick pacing should entertain those who dream of donning a super spy suit of their own.

SPY KIDS:  
ARMAGEDDON





BELLE



Watch it on Max

If your little one isn't into the whole superhero-action thing, "Belle" might be a better fit. The Oscar-nominated Japanese director Mamoru Hosoda ("Mirai") wrote and directed this cyber-age retelling of the classic "Beauty and the Beast," and the vibrant, fantastical — and sometimes eerily hyper-real — animation will transfix viewers who appreciate gorgeous visual storytelling. Here, the fairy-tale heroine is Suzu (voiced by Kaho Nakamura, who also sings the tunes), a lonely, painfully shy teenager living in a rural village with her widower father. When she discovers a virtual world called U, which allows her to live through a pink-haired avatar called Belle, who has no problem belting out songs onstage in front of millions, Suzu finally allows herself to escape the grief and insecurity that plague her IRL.

The beast here is the Dragon, a horned, caped creature who captures Belle's heart, even as he tries his best to intimidate her and keep his true identity secret. Hosoda's gentle handling of teen angst, the blissful terror of first crushes and the insecurities that we all have had to grapple with at that age should resonate with older kids and teenagers. They'll also likely recognize Suzu's silent thrill as she watches her online follower count soar.

Casts

Director: Mamoru Hosoda  
Writer: Mamoru Hosoda  
Stars: Kaho Nakamura, Ryo Narita, Shōta Sometani

SHAZAM! Fury of the Gods

Watch it on  
Max

We haven't seen the embattled foster child Billy Batson (Asher Angel) since 2019, when he first uttered the word "Shazam!" and morphed into the DC superhero of that same name (played by Zachary Levi). The director David F. Sandberg returns for the sequel, which has the same cheeky humor and wacky tone as the first installment, but this time the kids are older and they're battling the enraged daughters of Atlas: Hespera (Helen Mirren hamming it up in a pointy crown) and Kalypso (Lucy Liu). The daughters are hellbent on revenge because they believe Shazam stole the power of the gods, and they also want to control everyone on Earth, of course. It's up to Billy/Shazam and his foster buddies Freddy Freeman (Jack Dylan Grazer), a.k.a. Captain Everypower (Adam Brody), and Anthea (Rachel Zegler) to stop them. There's also a secret third daughter of Atlas to keep viewers guessing, and plenty of all-out battle scenes laced with humorous one-liners and punchy reactions. Djimon Hounsou is back as the ancient wizard who granted Billy his powers, and the writers Henry Gayden (who co-wrote "Shazam!") and Chris Morgan (the "Fast and the Furious" franchise) do a good job of creating a teen superhero who constantly battles his own insecurities and anxieties, but always pulls through. It's the friendship binding Billy, Freddy, Anthea and the others, though, that holds the movie together. That, and the big old computer-generated battle scenes.

Casts

Director: David F. Sandberg  
Writers: Henry Gayden, Chris Morgan, Bill Parker  
Stars: Zachary Levi, Asher Angel, Jack Dylan Grazer

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