

The 50 Best Videos For Kids

Check out some of the greatest hits of all time.

By Erika Milvy

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101 Dalmatians (ages 6 and up) Small children love puppies, and this animated feature delivers in spotted spades. While Cruella De Vil's lust for a dog-skin coat may scare little ones, older kids will love her outrageous antics.

The Aristocats (ages 4 and up) Thanks to its jazzy flair, this feline version of Disney's *Lady and the Tramp* is a real winner. Upper-class kittens and bumbling cat-nappers enhance a romantic rich-cat, poor-cat tale.

Babar: King of the Elephants (ages 4 and up) Skillfully adapted from Jean and Laurent de Brunhoff's endearing stories, this European animated feature maintains the sweetness and warmth of the book's humanlike elephants.

Babe (ages 5 and up) Not since *Charlotte's Web* has a pig been so lovable as Babe in this surprise Australian hit. Kids will grow attached to the swine who beats the odds to work as a sheepdog.

Bear in the Big Blue House Live! (ages 2 to 6) Toddlers will want to be best friends with this cuddly, soft-spoken bear who teaches life lessons. Acoustic guitars and sweet vocals create a folksy serenity.

Beauty and the Beast (ages 6 and up) Cracking the mold of Disney princesses, Belle rolls her eyes at "Prince Charming" in favor of inner beauty. Add singing tableware and you have one unique musical.

The Black Stallion (ages 7 and up) Movie critic Pauline Kael called this possibly "the greatest children's movie ever made." Kids will envy the unbreakable bond that forms between a young castaway and a wild horse.

Blue's Big Musical Movie (ages 2 to 6) Parents will bop along with their preschoolers while the Ray Charles voiced character teaches kids about musical notes, tempo, and soul in the TV show's first feature film.

Born Free (ages 5 and up) This 1966 real-life story follows a British couple who takes in and later sets free an orphaned lioness. The film's moving message of respect for animals and their habitats is especially effective.

Charlotte's Web (ages 4 and up) This poignant cartoon is faithful to E. B. White's lovely and touching book. With the help of a motherly spider, Wilbur the pig puts on a show to avoid becoming bacon.

Chicka Chicka Boom Boom (ages 3 to 5) Based on the classic books, this collection of cartoon shorts brings the ABCs to life. Kids will learn and laugh as 26 childlike letters scamper up a coconut tree to a funky beat.

Chitty Chitty Bang Bang (ages 4 and up) What kid doesn't want a magic chariot, an inventor dad, and a "Truly Scrumptious" stepmom? This high-flying feature film makes wishes come true—and delivers some of the best music in children's movies.

Chrysanthemum . . . and More Kevin Henkes Stories (ages 5 to 8) In this collection of animated shorts, Meryl Streep narrates the title tale of a tenderhearted mouse teased because of her unusual name. Sarah Jessica Parker and Mary Beth Hurt narrate Henkes's other tales of mice scampering toward self-acceptance.

Clifford Tries His Best (ages 2 to 7) Enjoy 90 minutes of canine fun with this larger-than-life dog, voiced by the late John Ritter. Little kids will be tickled by the notion that Clifford is the master of the house.

Doctor Dolittle (ages 4 and up) Being able to talk to animals would be a dream come true for most kids. But this vintage movie shows that

things can get out of control when a horse wears glasses, a chimp tries to be a chef, and the bizarre Pushme-Pullyu is on the loose.

Dr. Seuss's How the Grinch Stole Christmas! (ages 3 and up) Don't pass over the 1966 animated film for Jim Carrey's recent live-action version. The original is still the best, with old-time horror star Boris Karloff as the holiday grouch.

Dr. Seuss's The Cat in the Hat (ages 3 and up) Mike Myers recently brought a remake of The Cat to the big screen. But this tongue-tangling 1971 original is a far better pick for true Seuss fans.

Dumbo (ages 4 and up) Great music, charm, and a trainload of animals make this feature a timeless classic. The 1941 tale of a baby elephant ostracized because of his unwieldy ears teaches tots about the upside to uniqueness.

E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial (ages 5 and up) Steven Spielberg's masterpiece gets new life in the digitally altered update (police guns are replaced with less-frightening walkie-talkies). Big and little viewers will be moved by Elliott's friendship with the homesick alien.

The Fantasia Anthology (all ages) Long before Baby Mozart married classical music and whimsical motion, Disney imagined that folks would enjoy watching stunning visuals set to songs. With works from Beethoven and Bach, Fantasia takes kids on a magical journey where they can hear the pictures and see the music.

Finding Nemo (ages 6 and up) A boatload of critters inhabit a breathtaking seascape in this Oscar-winning film. Your whole family will root as a clown fish goes on a daring mission to find his lost spawn. The best part: Ellen DeGeneres is a hoot as a forgetful fish.

Goodnight Moon and Other Sleepytime Tales (ages 1 to 5) Vocal talent rules in these animated shorts, as Susan Sarandon warmly narrates Margaret Wise Brown's bedtime classic, Natalie Cole shares "Tar Beach," and Billy Crystal livens up "There's a Nightmare in My Closet."

Happily Ever After: Fairy Tales for Every Child (ages 3 and up) A Thumbelina in a South American rain forest, Goldilocks in the Caribbean, a jazzy Pied Piper? HBO's TV series adds multicultural images to children's entertainment with animated humor and pizzazz. It includes a stellar cast of voice actors, such as Whoopi Goldberg and Denzel Washington.

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Harry the Dirty Dog . . . and More Terrific Tales (ages 2 to 8) Like all Weston Woods titles, these beautifully done shorts are a welcome change from many of today's fast and loud media that leave little to the imagination. This series has four funny stories about dogs and a darling one about rats.

The Incredible Adventures of Wallace & Gromit (ages 6 and up) A must-have for parents determined to steer their kids off the beaten path, Nick Park's clever, quirky clay animation features the off-kilter escapades of cheese-loving Wallace and his faithful hound, Gromit.

The Jungle Book (ages 4 and up) Set in a jungle full of dangerous animals, the film is cushioned by the lighthearted humor and friendship of an orphaned boy and a bear. The madcap monkey business is set to jazz, swing, and groovy vocals from bandleaders Louis Prima and Phil Harris.

The Land Before Time Anniversary Edition (ages 5 to 12) The first and best of the popular ten-title series follows the exciting adventures of Littlefoot, an orphaned brontosaurus. Teaching cooperation and tolerance, Littlefoot joins forces with other baby dinosaurs.

The Lion King (ages 6 and up) The laws of the jungle meet Shakespeare's Hamlet as a lion cub realizes he must avenge his father's death, claim the throne, and complete the circle of life. It can be

heavy stuff at times. But Elton John's music and the vivid animation pack a powerful emotional punch worth experiencing.

The Little Mermaid (ages 6 and up) When Sebastian sings the sea's praises in a show-stopping calypso number, it's easy to see why this 1989 film is credited with reviving Disney. While Ariel is Disney's first modern leading lady, her dad and Prince Eric still have to rescue her.

The Looney Tunes Golden Collection (ages 4 and up) With this four-disc set, Bugs Bunny fans will take delight in a simpler time when duck-on-pig violence was all in good fun and falling off cliffs never truly spoiled your day.

The Many Adventures of Winnie-the-Pooh (ages 2 and up) Introduce your kids to author A. A. Milne's original Pooh stories. Whether he's in pursuit of honey or braving the blustery elements, this 1977 collection captures the big heart of the "willy-nilly, silly old bear."

Mary Poppins (ages 4 and up) The sheer joy and wonder of Mary Poppins gives the musical its timeless appeal. Julie Andrews is magical as the flying nanny whose adventures fuse live action with animation. With genius songs like "A Spoonful of Sugar," it's a movie kids will watch again and again.

Monsters, Inc. (ages 5 and up) Kids everywhere will love the film's notion that "big, scary" monsters are actually afraid of them. Funny and reassuring, the cartoon is also a satire on corporate greed.

Peanuts Classic Holiday Collection (ages 3 and up) New generations can discover the incomparable Charles Schulz with this trio of classic TV specials. Watching Linus's resilient faith in the Great Pumpkin and sharing Charlie Brown's appreciation for the sorriest of Christmas trees make great holiday traditions.

The Red Balloon (ages 4 and up) In this beautiful, wordless 1956 tale of friendship and loss, a helium-filled balloon magically follows a lonely boy through the streets of Paris.

Schoolhouse Rock! Special 30th Anniversary Edition (ages 4 and up) This two-disc DVD set is a must-have for '70s-reared parents eager to prove that learning is fun-damental. The three R's meet rock and roll with retro-groovy hits like "I'm Just a Bill."

Sesame Street's 25th Birthday--A Musical Celebration (ages 1 to 6) Hard to believe, but Sesame Street enchanted tykes long before Elmo moved into the neighborhood. This celebrity-packed collection showcases the talents of longtime residents, including Ernie singing the popular "Rubber Duckie" tune.

Shrek (ages 6 and up) Forget Prince Charming! In this hip, kooky take on fairy tales, an ogre and his donkey sidekick save the princess. Kids won't get all the pop-culture jokes, but they just might learn that good looks are only skin-deep.

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (ages 4 and up) This Grimm's fairy tale became the 1937 hit that made Disney synonymous with childhood wonder. Wicked witchery will likely scare tykes, while old-fashioned sex roles may scare adults. But there are seven jolly reasons and loads of catchy songs to end all worries.

The Sound of Music (ages 6 and up) Youngsters won't comprehend the scary events that cause the Von Trapps to flee Austria. But they'll love seeing Julie Andrews's infectious spirit turn a sad house into a singing house.

Totally Teletubbies (ages 1 to 3) Adults may find life in Teletubbyland rather bizarre, but it makes perfect sense to tots. After all, this U.K. import was created to reflect how toddlers play and interact.

Thomas the Tank Engine and Friends: Platinum Collection (ages 2 to 7) If your child is cuckoo for choo-choos, this greatest-hits collection is not to be missed. It features special "best-of" Thomas, Percy, and James episodes.

Toy Story 2 (ages 5 and up) Favorite toy Woody (voiced by Tom Hanks) discovers he's a celebrity: a collector's item from a classic TV show. This sequel surpasses the original by combining fantasy and

action with a soul-searching theme as Woody must choose love or fame.

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VeggieTales: Heroes of the Bible--Lions, Shepherds, and Queens (Oh My!) (ages 3 and up) Sunday-morning values meet Saturday-morning fun as Bible lessons are turned into animated adventures, such as "Dave and the Giant Pickle." Parents seeking quality Christian entertainment will embrace this series' knack for giving garden-variety vegetables moral and religious beliefs.

Where the Wild Things Are (ages 3 to 5) Able to tame little monsters of all ages, this animated short captivates with its faithful rendition of Maurice Sendak's classic. It also includes funky versions of "In the Night Kitchen" and "The Nutshell Kids."

The Wiggles: Wiggly Safari (ages 2 to 6) Crocodile hunter Steve Irwin introduces the Aussie preschool-pop singers to kangaroos, kookaburras, and other kid-pleasing critters. With backgrounds in early-childhood education, the group creates a combo of giggly songs and dances that teach tykes about the Outback.

The William Steig Video Library (ages 3 to 5) The work of beloved picture-book author William Steig is brought to dazzling life in this collection that includes enchanting masterpieces such as "The Amazing Bone" and "Sylvester and the Magic Pebble."

Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory (ages 6 and up) Charlie's awe of the chocolate factory becomes our own in this wonderfully original classic based on the Roald Dahl novel. Gene Wilder is brilliant as the mysterious inventor who runs a spectacular, Seuss-style fun house.

The Wizard of Oz (ages 5 and up) This treasured and timeless epic thrills and chills some 65 years after its premiere. Young kids might try to hide under the couch when the monkeys take flight or the scarecrow is thrown a curve fireball. But the splendor of memorable songs and the dazzling images will keep them peering out from between their fingers.

Yellow Submarine (ages 4 and up) You don't have to be a Beatles fan to enjoy this 1968 animated film. In fact, kids will have a blast taking a journey through the movie's fanciful pop-art dreamscape while listening to the band's playful and childlike soundtrack, including the title song and "All You Need Is Love."