

Parent Preview

Kung Fu Panda

Paramount / Dreamworks



MPAA Rating PG

Overall: B+

Violence: C+

Sexual Content: A-

Language: A-

Drugs/Alcohol: A

The MPAA has rated *Kung Fu Panda* PG for sequences of martial arts action.

Heroes come in all kinds of shapes and, in this case, sizes. Perpetually plump and bulky around the belly, Po the panda (voice by Jack Black) secretly dreams of being a kung fu fighter like his idols, the Furious Five. His bedroom windowsill is lined with action figures of the famous martial arts masters and his mind tends to wander to scenes of combat whenever he gets a free minute. But, rather than pursuing his passion, the generously-portioned bear is stuck serving steaming bowls of noodles in his family's restaurant.

When Master Oogway (voice by Randall Duk Kim) proclaims that a new Dragon Warrior will be chosen to bring peace to the town, Po labors up the long flight of stairs to the Jade Palace to hear the announcement. Unfortunately he arrives at the castle just as the gates close on the courtyard. Foiled in every attempt to see the ceremony, Po finally blasts himself over the wall just in time to be unexpectedly chosen to fulfill the ancient prophecy.

His new colleagues, Tigress (voice by Angelina Jolie), Mantis (voice by Seth Rogen), Monkey (voice by Jackie Chan), Viper (voice by Lucy Liu) and Crane (voice by David Cross) are abhorred by the choice. But there's no time for wallowing in their disbelief when the kung fu fighters and Master Shifu (voice by Dustin Hoffman) discover that Tai Lung, the snow leopard (voice by Ian McShane), has escaped from the high security prison controlled by Commander Vichar (voice by Michael Clarke Duncan). With Tai Lung headed for their tiny valley, Master Shifu has only days to prepare the pudgy panda to meet the oppressive foe.

Luckily like all good underdog tales, *Kung Fu Panda* believes that skill is secondary to heart when it comes to tackling trouble. Devising a unique set of training exercises that appeal to the bear's love of food, Master Shifu soon has the panda pulling off all kinds of quasi kung fu moves in hopes of defeating the leopard.

With very few concerns for parents, other than the onslaught of animated martial arts violence, the film offers a feel-good tale about building faith in oneself and believing in the talents of others. Still, families of younger children (or those prone to mimicking movies) need to be aware that the kung fu moves are almost constant in this script, with characters being kicked, punched, singed by flames and pushed down stairs.

Yet for older children, this gaggle of cartoon characters confirms that heroism isn't only limited to the lean or lovely. Big problems need big solutions and sometimes it takes a big guy with his own kind of talents to get the job done right.

Beyond the movie ratings: What Parents need to know about *Kung Fu Panda*...

Although this film contains only mild name-calling and some brief rude humor, it is jam packed with depictions of martial arts action. The animated animals kick, punch and tumble their way through one encounter after another. Characters are also choked, burned, hit with spikes and pushed down a flight of stairs. Soldiers use weapons such as swords, chains and arrows. One character is stuck with needles during an acupuncture session. Fireworks and other explosions involving characters are portrayed.

Talk about the movie with your family...

What kinds of father/son relationships are portrayed in this film? What role can fathers play in helping their children achieve success in life? At what point must a child be responsible for his or her own decisions?

Master Oogway believes that people often meet their destiny on the road they take to avoid it. Are some issues in life better confronted than avoided? How can facing fears build strength and character in a person?

Many of the martial arts are designed to help a person find inner discipline and peace. What does Master Shifu discover about letting go of the 'illusion of control'? How does Po help him achieve tranquility?

Video alternatives...

Size doesn't always matter when it comes to solving problems. In [A Bug's Life](#), an undersized ant leaves the colony in search of help to fight off a group of grasshopper bullies. Real life pandas take to the screen in the story of a young boy who has to help save a lost cub from poachers in the movie [Amazing Panda Adventure](#).