

‘Turning Red’ Is a Good Conversation Starter — and Not Just for Girls

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Disney’s newest animated film, “Turning Red,” in which an adolescent girl contends with puberty, cultural expectations and her newfound tendency to turn into a giant red panda when overtaken by emotion, has viewers buzzing.

Although [critical reviews](#) of the film have been largely positive, [some viewers](#) — especially parents — have had a rather different take. Some have been aghast that the movie discusses menstruation; others dislike its exploration of romantic crushes and sexuality; and still others are upset that the main character, 13-year-old Mei Lee, rebels against her parents by repeatedly lying and sneaking out.

[One amateur reviewer wrote](#) on the website Rotten Tomatoes that the movie “suggests being rude to your parents and family is OK if you are an adolescent hitting puberty.”

Yet child psychologists say it’s unlikely that the movie will promote bad or salacious behavior, or cause harm to younger children who may not understand its mature themes. If anything, they note, the movie could bring families together by sparking age-appropriate conversations about key issues and values, and by validating the struggles that teens often experience.

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