Toy Story 5: Growing Up in a Digital World

A Family Discussion Guide from Media Power Youth

Growing up in a digital world brings new opportunities for connection, creativity, and learning, but it also introduces challenges around friendships, belonging, and navigating online experiences.

For parents and caregivers, conversations about children's digital lives often focus on screen time and setting limits, but what children experience through media, how those experiences make them feel, and how they influence their relationships are just as important. *Toy Story 5* offers families a familiar and engaging way to explore these topics together. Through Bonnie's experiences, the movie introduces situations involving peer pressure, social comparison, digital kindness, and the desire to fit in.

Media Power Youth created this guide to help families use moments from the movie as starting points for meaningful conversations. Rather than focusing on rules or finding the right answers, the goal is to encourage curiosity, build critical thinking skills, and help children recognize how media can influence their feelings, relationships, and choices. You don't need to discuss every scene or answer every question. Choose the moments that resonate with your family, listen to what your child notices, and let the conversation unfold naturally.

MOVIE SNAPSHOT | Eight-year-old Bonnie is having trouble making friends. When her parents give her a new tablet named Lilypad, she finds new ways to connect with other kids, but online teasing and the pressure to keep up make those friendships more complicated. Meanwhile, Jessie and the other toys wonder where they fit as Bonnie's interests change. *Toy Story 5* explores friendship, growing up, and how technology can help us connect with others while also creating new challenges.

WHY WATCH & TALK TOGETHER?

Watching movies together is a great way for families to connect and start conversations. Toy Story 5 gives parents and caregivers a chance to talk with children about friendships, feelings, fitting in, and how media influences their everyday lives. This guide uses moments from the movie to help families explore these topics together. You don't need to be a media literacy expert. Just watch, ask questions, listen, and discover what your child thinks.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Choose a scene that stands out to your family and start with what the characters are experiencing. Talking about characters' feelings and choices can help children recognize and find words for their own emotions. Ask what your child noticed, share your perspective, and let the conversation unfold naturally. There's no need to cover every question or have all the answers.

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EIGHT CONVERSATIONS • PICK ANY ONE

01 Media influence & digital wellness
02 Peer pressure & self-confidence
03 Social comparison & belonging
04 Fear of missing out
05 Sharing, context & digital kindness
06 Trusted adults & asking for help
07 Growing up & change
08 Friendship & belonging

01 / MEDIA INFLUENCE & DIGITAL WELLNESS

The New Toy in Town

THE MOVIE MOMENT • 10:14

Bonnie's parents see an advertisement for Lilypad and surprise her with the tablet. Bonnie is thrilled with her new device and quickly becomes absorbed in exploring everything it can do.

TALK ABOUT IT

- What makes Lilypad seem so exciting before Bonnie even gets to use it?
- How does the advertisement influence what Bonnie's parents expect from the tablet?
- What could Bonnie's parents have talked about with her before giving her Lilypad?

CAREGIVER CONVERSATION CUE | Advertisements don't just tell us what products do. They can influence what we want and what we expect from them. Help children think about the difference between what an advertisement promises and what using a product is actually like. Bonnie's experience also creates an opportunity to talk about preparing for new technology. Before giving a child a device, families can discuss how it will be used, what to do if something online feels uncomfortable, and how parents can offer support. Ask your child what would help them feel prepared to use a new device.

TRY IT TOGETHER | Choose an advertisement for a toy, game, or app. Talk about what makes it appealing and what the advertisement leaves out. Then imagine bringing that product into your home. What would you want to know or discuss before using it?

TAKEAWAY | Media can influence what we want. Thinking critically and talking together helps families make thoughtful choices about new technology.

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02 / PEER PRESSURE & SELF CONFIDENCE

Fitting In or Belonging?

THE MOVIE MOMENT • 22:44

Bonnie is excited to discover that Jessie and Bullseye have snuck into her bag for the sleepover. At first, she can't wait to show them to the other kids, but she begins to feel embarrassed when she realizes they might not share her excitement.

TALK ABOUT IT

- What changes about Bonnie's behavior when the other children are around?
- What could Bonnie have said or done to stand up for Jessie and Bullseye, even if the other kids didn't think they were cool?
- How do friends, movies, and influencers affect what we think is cool or not?

CAREGIVER CONVERSATION CUE | Children pick up messages about what's cool, popular, or embarrassing from friends, movies, and online. These messages can influence whether they feel comfortable sharing what they enjoy. Talk about the difference between fitting in by changing yourself and belonging because others accept you as you are.

TRY IT TOGETHER | Have each family member share something they love that others might find surprising. It could be a hobby, game, favorite toy, book, or activity. Talk about why you enjoy it and what makes it special to you.

TAKEAWAY | Being yourself sometimes means enjoying things that other people don't. Good friendships make room for those differences.

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03 / SOCIAL COMPARISON & BELONGING

Feeling Left Out and Keeping Up

THE MOVIE MOMENT • 43:50

Bonnie comes home from a sleepover feeling sad. Lilypad explains how far behind she is, connecting her experience to what she doesn't know about the other children's interests.

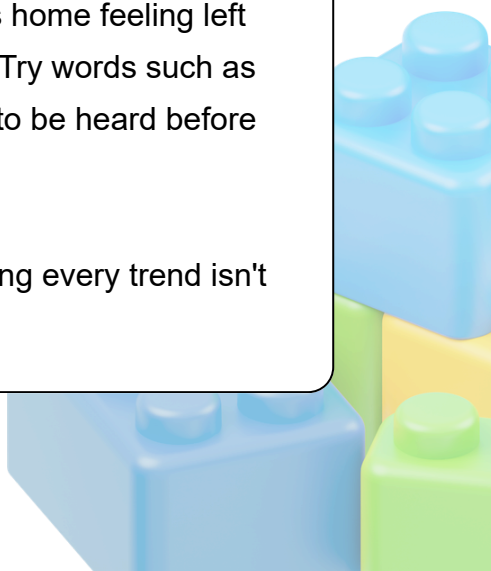
TALK ABOUT IT

- How can you tell Bonnie is feeling sad from her face, voice, and body language?
- How might hearing that she is “behind” affect Bonnie when she is already feeling hurt?
- How can media influence what we think we need to know or do to be included?

CAREGIVER CONVERSATION CUE | When children feel left out, they may wonder whether something is wrong with them. Lilypad's explanation could reinforce Bonnie's worry that she needs to catch up to be accepted. Help children question the idea that everyone needs to follow the same trends or enjoy the same things. Shared interests can help us connect, but caring friendships also involve listening, noticing others, and making sure everyone is included.

TRY IT TOGETHER | Practice responding to someone who comes home feeling left out. Take turns being the person sharing and the person listening. Try words such as “That sounds hurtful” or “I'm glad you told me.” Notice how it feels to be heard before someone offers advice.

TAKEAWAY | Media can make us feel pressure to keep up. Knowing every trend isn't what makes someone worth including.



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04 / FEAR OF MISSING OUT



What Did I Miss?

THE MOVIE MOMENT • 52:20

Bonnie wakes up to find that Lilypad's battery is dead. Her friends are already playing games together that morning, and she is unable to join them on her tablet. With help from her toys, Bonnie also has a chance to take a break and notice what's happening around her.

TALK ABOUT IT

- How does Bonnie react when she realizes Lilypad's battery is dead?
- Can we feel excluded even when nobody is intentionally leaving us out?
- How can we tell when it's time to take a break from a game or device?

CAREGIVER CONVERSATION CUE | The fear of missing out can make being unable to connect feel upsetting or urgent. Acknowledge those feelings while helping children recognize that missing one activity doesn't mean they're losing their friendships. Bonnie's experience also creates an opportunity to talk about taking breaks. Sometimes we become so focused on what is happening online that we miss what's around us. Talk about how to recognize when it's time for a break and how family members can help each other step away without making it feel like a punishment.

TRY IT TOGETHER | Create a family "break plan." Talk about how each person knows when they need a break from their devices. What signs might they notice? What could family members say or do to help? Together, choose one way to make taking breaks easier for everyone.

TAKEAWAY | Missing something online doesn't mean we're missing out on everything. Taking breaks can help us notice and enjoy what's happening around us.

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05 / SHARING, CONTEXT & DIGITAL KINDNESS

When the Chat Turns Hurftul

THE MOVIE MOMENT • 1:01:55

A photo of Bonnie's toys becomes part of the online teasing in a group chat.

TALK ABOUT IT

- What does the photo leave out about Bonnie and why her toys matter to her?
- Why is it important to think carefully before sharing photos or personal information online?
- What could someone watching the chat do to help Bonnie?

CAREGIVER CONVERSATION CUE | A photo shows only part of a story. Captions and comments can shape how others interpret it, and once something is shared digitally, it can be copied, altered, or passed along without our knowledge. AI tools can also make it easier to manipulate images. Use this moment to establish family guidelines about sharing photos and personal information, emphasizing that even private messages cannot be guaranteed to stay private. Remind children that the person being teased is never responsible for someone else's hurtful behavior. Discuss ways to speak up, offer support, and involve a trusted adult.

TRY IT TOGETHER | Choose a family photo everyone agrees to use and print it. Create two different captions, one kind and one misleading, and place them beneath the photo to see how each changes its meaning.

TAKEAWAY | Pictures never tell the whole story. Think carefully before sharing photos or personal information, and remember that what happens online can have real consequences.

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06 / TRUSTED ADULTS & ASKING FOR HELP

You Can Talk to Me

THE MOVIE MOMENT • 1:10:27
Bonnie's conversation with her mom shows how asking gentle questions, listening, and offering reassurance can help children feel safe talking about difficult experiences online.

TALK ABOUT IT

- What does Bonnie's mom say or do that might help Bonnie feel safe sharing what happened?
- Why might Bonnie need to hear that she isn't in trouble before showing her mom?
- Who are the trusted adults you could talk to if something online made you feel hurt, worried, or uncomfortable?

CAREGIVER CONVERSATION CUE | Children may hesitate to seek help if they worry about being blamed or losing access to their friends. Ask questions with curiosity, give them time to answer, and reassure them that coming to you is the right thing to do. Listen, thank them for sharing, and explain any next steps so they understand how you are helping.

TRY IT TOGETHER | Identify a few trusted adults your child could turn to. Practice starting a conversation with "Something happened, and I need help." Let your child practice while you respond: "Thank you for telling me. You're not in trouble for asking for help. Tell me more.

TAKEAWAY | Asking for help is easier when children know they will be heard, supported, and loved.



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07 / GROWING UP & CHANGE

Growing Up & Keeping Memories

THE MOVIE MOMENT • 1:12:27
Emily's childhood time capsule helps Jessie see that growing up and finding new interests doesn't erase the meaning of what we once loved.

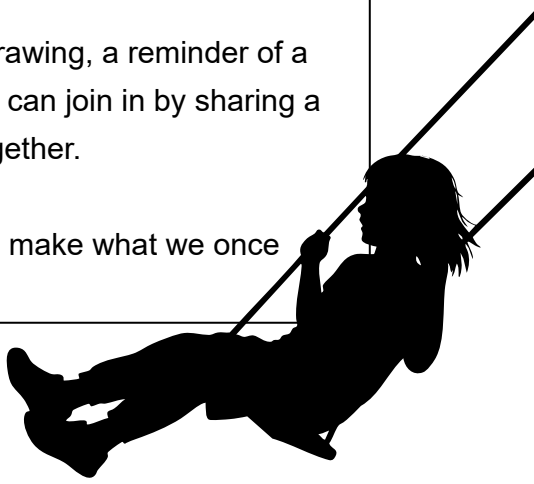
TALK ABOUT IT

- Why does Jessie worry about being forgotten, and what does the time capsule help her understand?
- What is something you used to love that you don't do as often anymore? What made it special?
- How can we make room for new interests while remembering things that mattered to us?

CAREGIVER CONVERSATION CUE | Children's interests change at different rates. Toys, games, and pretend play can remain meaningful even as new activities become part of their lives. Messages from friends and media may make children feel they should have outgrown something already. Give them room to enjoy what they love and move on when they are ready. A favorite activity can become a happy memory without becoming something to feel embarrassed about.

TRY IT TOGETHER | Create a mini time capsule with a photo or drawing, a reminder of a favorite activity, and a note about why it matters to you now. Adults can join in by sharing a childhood memory of their own. Choose a future date to open it together.

TAKEAWAY | Growing up makes room for new interests. It doesn't make what we once loved any less special.



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08 / FRIENDSHIP & BELONGING

Finding Your People

THE MOVIE MOMENT • 1:25:34

Bonnie meets Blaze and discovers a friend who also loves imaginative play.

TALK ABOUT IT

- What feels different about Bonnie when she is with Blaze?
- Do friends need to like all the same things?
- How does Blaze connect with Bonnie without pressuring her to play?

CAREGIVER CONVERSATION CUE | Notice Bonnie's expressions and actions instead of telling your child how she feels. Shared interests can begin friendships; kindness and respect help them last.

TRY IT TOGETHER | Have each family member write or draw three things they enjoy. Find one shared interest and one new thing to try together.

TAKEAWAY | You do not have to be alike to connect.

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FOR PARENTS & CAREGIVERS

Keep the Conversation Going

GET CURIOUS BEFORE SETTING A RULE

Ask what children are watching, making, learning or feeling, not only how long they spend online.

MAKE ROOM FOR PLAY

Offer opportunities for child-led pretend play and hands-on activities. Give them time to make up stories, invent games, and explore their own ideas through play.

PROTECT SHARED ROUTINES

Discuss device-free meals, bedtime charging locations and opportunities to spend quality time together.

MODEL THE CHOICE

Say why you are putting your own device away. Adults can share their own struggles and decisions, too.

KEEP THE DOOR OPEN

Remind children they can come to you when something online feels hurtful or confusing. Listen, thank them for telling you, and work through the next steps together.

A FAMILY CHECK-IN

What is one thing technology helps our family do well? What is one moment when it gets in the way? Choose one small change to try this week.

WHY THESE CONVERSATIONS MATTER

Media can offer opportunities to learn, create, and connect. The American Academy of Pediatrics encourages families to consider what children do with media, who they interact with, and whether it leaves enough time for sleep, imaginative play, physical activity, and time together. These conversations help families think about how media fits into their everyday lives.

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Sources & Further Reading

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- Yogman, M., Garner, A., Hutchinson, J., Hirsh-Pasek, K., & Golinkoff, R. M. (2018). The power of play: A pediatric role in enhancing development in young children. Pediatrics, 142(3), e20182058.

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