

Parental Guidance – Great Fun That Wins Your Heart

Old school grandfather Artie (Billy Crystal), who is accustomed to calling the shots, meets his match when he and his eager-to-please wife Diane (Bette Midler) agree to babysit their three grandkids when their type-A helicopter parents (Marisa Tomei, Tom Everett Scott) go away for work. But when 21st century parenting styles collide with Artie and Diane's old school methods of tough rules, lots of love, and old-fashioned games, it's learning to bend—not holding your ground—that binds a family together.

Something that's pretty hard to do these days is find a movie that appeals to the complete family age spectrum. Director Andy Fickman's *Parental Guidance* fits the bill easily. Nowadays—excuse me for pontificating a bit here—but it seems that the studios can't resist sticking in a certain amount of distasteful content in a PG-rated movie. It usually requires you to do some form of damage control later with your elementary age child, if you brought them at all. You can rest assured that this is not the case with *Parental Guidance*. The first thing my wife said to me after the ending credits was, "I can't believe how clean it was!" Making this a movie for which I can confidently state, that you can take your five-year-old, your teens, and grandma. Finally.

When I saw the preview trailer, my first reaction was that it was going to be the same jokes that we've seen time and time again in a movie with grandparents and grandkids. Instead, I was pleasantly surprised at a comedy that had tons of laugh-out-loud slapstick humor—that I love—but which also included a much deeper reminder of how generations must work together and that family needs to be valued above all other "things."

You will love Billy Crystal and Bette Midler together. They

had me in stitches. Not to mention that they are a breed of performer that seems to be fading from the acting landscape. They alone are worth the price of admission. I was hard-pressed to remember the last time I laughed that hard for that long a stretch.

Content Watch: Rated PG for some rude humor. If you're wondering, it's basically khakis wet in the crotch with a super soaker—something that we, here in Florida, call ... everyday life.

Enjoy *Parental Guidance*. It's not a perfect movie. It's not going to win any awards. But it is great fun.