

coverstory

BY GEORGE DICKIE

A family can't say no to 'Yes Day' in Netflix comedy

It's a phenomenon that's catching on around the country.

Parents, tired of constantly saying no to their kids, relax the rules and let their kids do whatever they please for a 24-hour period – provided, of course, it's not illegal, immoral, life-threatening or will tick off the neighbors. It's called a "Yes Day" and it's also the title of an upcoming Netflix movie.

Premiering Friday, March 12, the family comedy stars Jennifer Garner ("13 Going on 30," "Alias") and Edgar Ramirez ("Wrath of the Titans," "American Crime Story") as Allison and Carlos Torres, a Los Angeles couple who weary of being the heavies to their kids Katie, Nando and Ellie (Jenna Ortega, Julian Lerner, Everly Carganilla) and let them take the reins and make the rules for a day.

On the surface, it's a win-win for all concerned as the youngsters get to plan their own fun without restrictions and Mom and Dad get to take something of a mental health day. But in this case, it also leads to a day of adventure around L.A. that includes a trip to Magic Mountain, a massive water balloon fight and a tidal wave of soap suds in the Torres house.

It's the brainchild of Garner, an executive producer here who recently granted her own kids a Yes Day and pitched the idea to Miguel Arteta ("Youth in Revolt," "The Good Girl"), who directed the film.

"One of the things that really blew my mind was that there's been a little bit of research on it ..." Arteta explains. "And one of the things that has been consistent is that kids request to turn off their phones and parents to turn off all devices Because nowadays to think of anything that would have kids (wanting) to get offline, it's just so surprising and also so hopeful.

"And Jennifer Garner told me that's one of the (reasons why she) really wanted to make this movie, is that there is hope that people want to spend time with each other and appreciate each other and really be present with each other."

Filming gave the cast a few weeks of fun. The younger actors got to go on the rides continuously during the three-day shoot at Magic Mountain and fling in excess of 30,000 water balloons during the five days filming that scene in a park north of Pasadena, where Nat Faxon's ("The Way Way Back") character got pummeled. And Ramirez, best known for roles in action films, got to try his hand at comedy.



"It's always such a pleasure when you take a dramatic actor and give him a free rein to have more fun," Arteta says. "And Jen Garner was really helpful with that, encouraging him, making him feel safe to be silly. And we really lucked out that they loved each other and the kids and the five really loved each other. You hope for that kind of chemistry and you pray for it. You try to predict it. It doesn't always happen but I think one of the reasons that there is sweetness in the movie is because they all really, really dug each other."

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