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[4 PARENTS' MOVIE GUIDE](#)
[4 CHILD STARS WORTH WATCHING, PAGE 2](#)



(CONTINUED)




Hallie Kate Eisenberg: Though I'm sure she paid for college many times over with these, I sort of wish Hallie Kate Eisenberg hadn't done those Pepsi commercials for four years. In some ways, she might always be that soda-pop kid to me. But in **'How to Eat Fried Worms'** -- an otherwise mediocre film -- she glowed. She exudes a sense of calm and deep wisdom, and with the right parts she could be incredible. She's due to appear later this year in a drama called "P.J.," about a man who witnesses a life-shattering accident. She also appeared alongside **Russell Crowe** in the 1999 drama **"The Insider."**

Keke Palmer: If you haven't seen **"Akeelah and the Bee,"** you're missing out. This 2006 film is about a girl from South Los Angeles who competes in the national spelling bee. Sounds gripping, I know. But thanks to Palmer's turn, it's an incredible drama, and just the right choice for a child who has big dreams and doesn't know how to make them come true. Palmer plays Akeelah, and she more than holds her own against acclaimed talents such as **Laurence Fishburne** and **Angela Bassett**. You can also see Palmer in the Disney made-for-TV movie **"Jump In!,"** where she plays a competitive double-Dutch rope jumper.

Emma Watson: Although **Daniel Radcliffe** is enjoying the spotlight these days for his stage work in the racy play "Equus," the real emerging star of the **"Harry Potter"** franchise is the lovely Emma Watson, whose performance as Hermione Granger is head and shoulders above Radcliffe's. And even though **Rupert Grint** is adorable as Ron Weasley, it's clear both he and Radcliffe are still mugging a bit for the cameras. You can get away with this as a child actor, but it doesn't translate much beyond puberty. Watson has been more than booked with the Harry Potter roles, but she'll surely have other offers once the series wraps (and she'd better stick with the Potter movies, or they will be forever marred by her absence).

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Freddie Highmore: Probably best known for his heartwarming performance as Charlie in "[Charlie and the Chocolate Factory](#)," Freddie Highmore dazzled in 2004's "[Finding Neverland](#)," the story of Peter Pan author J.M. Barrie. Set lore has it that the director had Highmore perform his toughest scene in that movie -- where he rips up a book and destroys a stage -- on the second day of filming so the adult actors on set would show him due respect.

Apparently it worked; [Johnny Depp](#), who played Barrie, requested Highmore for "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory." Depp isn't the only heavyweight Highmore has played against; he was also in the Russell Crowe film "[A Good Year](#)," where he played a young Russell Crowe. Despite the strange casting, Highmore pulled it off -- it was Russell Crowe's fault the movie clunked. Surprisingly enough, Highmore has said he doesn't want to act when he grows up, which would be a huge loss.

Hester Odgers: Who?

I know, I know. She's been in just one movie, 2005's "[Lassie](#)" remake. But she was wonderful. Her eyes have all the intensity of [Cillian Murphy's](#) ("[Batman Begins](#)," "[The Wind That Shakes the Barley](#)"), with none of the creepiness.

In "[Lassie](#)," Odgers played Cilla, the granddaughter of the imperious Duke who takes Lassie from poor little Joe Carraclough (played by the also wonderful Jonathan Mason). Though her part isn't large, she's mesmerizing and touching in this overlooked little movie. I haven't seen her in the TV miniseries "[Jane Eyre](#)," where she plays Helen Burns, but if her performance in "[Lassie](#)" is any indication, she'll light up the screen.

Who knows -- if one of these kids wins an Oscar 20 years from now, I'll be able to say, "I totally called that."

And, of course, being a parent hasn't been about self-deprivation for the sake of my kids; it's been about witnessing greatness from birth -- both on-screen and off.

Martha Brockenbrough is author of "It Could Happen to You: Diary of a Pregnancy and Beyond." She's also founder of SPOGG, the Society for the Promotion of Good Grammar. She writes a fun-with-kids column for Cranium.com, as well as an educational humor column for Encarta. Check out her [Web site](#).