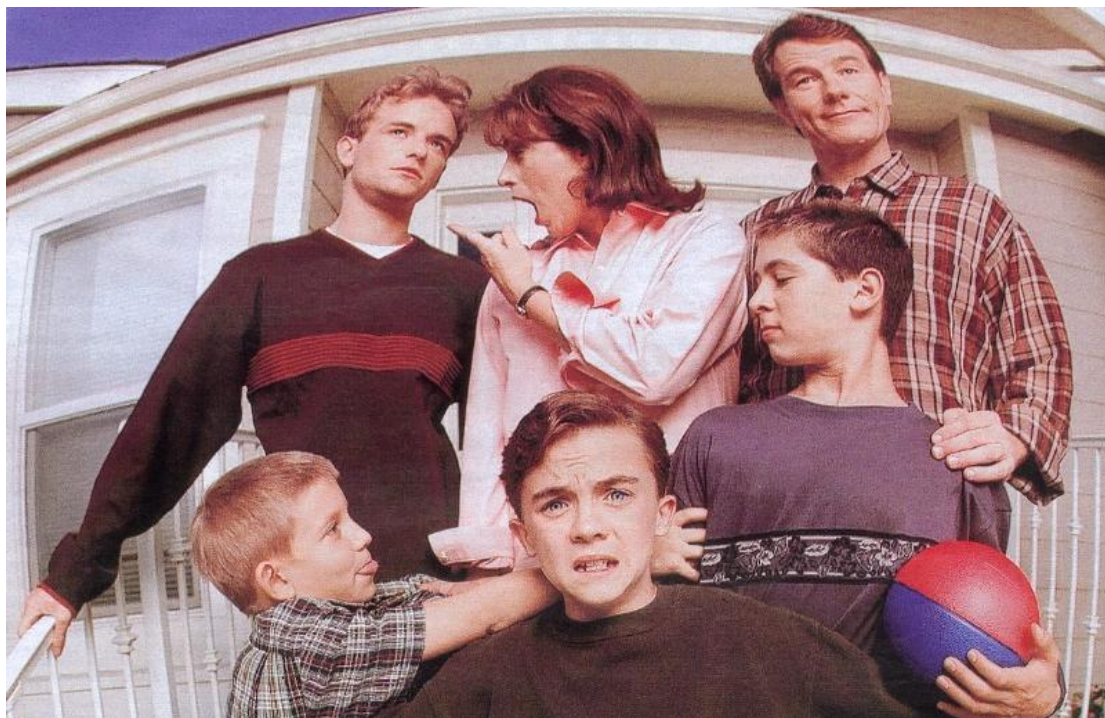


Malcolm in the Middle

US TV sitcom : 2000 : dir. : Regency / Fox : ? x 25 min
 prod: : scr: : dir.ph.:
Frankie Muniz; Justin Berfield; Erik Per Sullivan
 Jane Kaczmarek; Bryan Cranston; Christopher Kennedy Masterson

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The family as an acute attack of haemorrhoids – in foreground Dewey, 6 (Erik Per Sullivan), Malcolm (Frankie Muniz) and Reese, 11 (Justin Berfield). Providing rectal discomfort, brother Francis (Christopher Kennedy Masterson), mother Lois (Jane Kaczmarek) and father Hal (Bryan Cranston). Source: Radio Times

Radio Times introductory articles:

“Give it time. In the States and on Sky One, “**Malcolm in the Middle**” started off looking like it was headed straight for Malcolm in the Relegation Zone. But writing and ratings rallied and the show – now on series two over there, but only just making its terrestrial debut here - has established itself as one of the more interesting new American comedies of recent years. And one of the funniest.

From its theme tune by They Might Be Giants (remember their one hit, 1990’s “Birdhouse in

Your Soul“?)¹ to the opening shot, which goes from outer space to inside someone’s nostril, the house style is aggressive quirkiness, with Malcolm (Frankie Muniz) a pre-teen trouble-magnet who unaccountably also has a sky-high IQ. Much of the-core comedy comes from him being a genius in a largely brain-dead family – his never-quite-in-control mum (Jane Kaczmarek) prepares lunch for Malcolm and his two brothers by peering in the fridge and yelling “two of you can have slices of pizza and the other can have ... I dunno ... I think they’re peas“.

¹ Certainly not

Around this functional dysfunctionality are scattered all manner of winsomely weird details - tonight including birds building nests from human back hair, and a school bully who offers bulk discount to his victims.

Created by Linwood Boomer, one of the team behind "**Third Rock from the Sun**", "**Malcolm in the Middle**" plays like the surprisingly intelligent offspring of "**The Wonder Years**" and "**Married ... with Children**", immediately establishing a bunch of likeably odd characters with lots of mileage in them. Stick with it – it's brash, brattish and sometimes borderline tasteless, but also frequently borderline brilliant."

Radio Times review:

"The pilot episode of a new comedy series from the USA about a middle class family of four squabbling brothers and their long-suffering parents. When Malcolm, an ordinary boy [*sic*] with typical tastes [*sic*] suddenly discovers he has the I.Q. of a genius, his world is turned upside down."

"Which of Lois's sons ruined her special dress?"

No further information currently available. Any family in these times that produces four sons and no daughters must be doing *something* right. But actually the only bizarre thing in this family is that a 15-year old actor is cast as the 9-year old Malcolm, which is rather like casting a 9-year old as a foetus.

See subject index under **PRODIGIES / GIFTED CHILDREN** and **SITCOMS & SOAPS**.