

9 ESSENTIAL PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY TIPS FOR AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHERS

Children grow so quickly, so capturing them as they are is important because before you know it, they've changed. It can be frustrating when you look at your photos and they don't look quite like you envisaged at the time you took the picture, whether it's the light or someone closing their eyes at the moment you click the button, it doesn't take much to ruin a photo.

We asked Australian Duo Janet and Liana, from [Mum the Photographer](#) for some tips so that you can get the perfect shots to put on your [canvas prints](#) or in your [photo books](#).



Remember the Rule of Thirds

This is a composition technique where you divide your photo into a 3 x 3 grid. Place your subject along one of the lines of the grid or at an intersecting point. You'll find it makes your photos more appealing than centring your child in the photo. Lots of cameras have a grid function you can turn on so that you can easily see where you are lining them up.



Keep your Horizons Straight

Unless you are doing so artistically, keep the horizon or a significant line in your photo straight. Having them tilted can make the photo look off balanced.



Keep it Natural

Photograph your children just being themselves. Not every photo you take needs to have them smiling directly at the camera. Often these will be the photos that will remind you the most of what they were like in their childhood because you haven't interrupted the moment or posed them.



Natural Light is Best

Light really is going to have the biggest impact on your photo. Natural light will lift your photo no matter what type of camera you are using. If you're indoors, try opening curtains and doors to give yourself more light. Face your child towards the window so that the light is making their eyes sparkle. If you're outside, the light near dawn or dusk when it's golden and not harsh is the most flattering. We've got a whole module on lighting that you can access to learn more about how good light can make your photo, and how to handle tricky lighting situations.



Interact and Have Fun to get a Natural Smile

Rather than "say cheese!" have a bit of fun with your child. Tell jokes, sing silly songs or mix the words up to their favourites. The "say cheese" smile isn't a true reflection of how your child really looks when they smile and with a bit of jumping around from you it's not hard to get a genuine one



Be In the Photos too!

Too often we hide behind our cameras and don't be a part of the record we are creating. Hand your camera over to a friend or set up the timer function and get in the frame too!



Remove Clutter from the Shot

Your child is the star of your photos so remove distracting things from the background. It might be as simple as moving the washing basket to the side or taking away a few toys. By clearing out of the clutter and you'll keep the focus on your little one rather than "stuff" in the background. Also make sure that there are no items in the background that appear to be sprouting out of their heads like tree branches or lamp poles.



Fill the Frame

Rather than just leaving a bit of space around your child, consider filling the frame as you'll get to really see the details. It also adds variety to your photos which are generally taken further back.



Try a Different Perspective

When you are taking a photo try to come at it from a few different angles rather than just the standard front on. What does the scene look like from above, below or behind? Grouping a few of these photos together will also tell a great story.