

PORTRAIT SESSION GUIDE

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your guide to a
stress free
photo session

what to wear
& more



welcome

Family photos are an amazing way to celebrate what makes your relationships so unique and to capture happy memories. But for some parents, the thought of taking family photos can sound more stressful than enjoyable.

Luckily, it doesn't have to be that way! With a skilled, experienced family photographer behind the lens and a bit of thoughtful preparation, it can be a great experience that rewards you gorgeous photos. As your family portrait photographer, I'll provide you with beautiful family portraits that capture all of the friendship, fun, and love in your family unit. (And I'll help your kids have fun while doing it!)

4 steps for a *stress free* photo session with your kids

As any parent knows, making sure your kids cooperate and behave for hours at a time is no easy task! Family photo sessions can seem a bit daunting. But with some preparation and a lot of patience, your family photo session can be an enjoyable experience for the entire family. Here's how you can make sure your photo session is stress-free.

PREP YOUR KIDS IN ADVANCE

Tell your kids about the photoshoot well ahead of time. Tell them what to expect. Let them know how much you're looking forward to it and why your family is doing it. If you're excited, they'll definitely catch your enthusiasm!

LET THEM BE INVOLVED

Include your children in the planning process. Ask them what colors they think the family should wear. Help them pick out an outfit, either from their closet or at the store. When children feel involved, they're much more willing to participate.

BRING BACKUP

Make sure you're well prepared for photoshoot day. Bring along a change of clothes, plenty of snacks, water, diapers, etc. That way, even if the unexpected happens, you'll be ready for it!

MAKE IT FUN!

Make photoshoot day a special occasion! Bring along snacks and toys to keep their energy up. Plan on doing something fun after the session so they look forward to the outing all day.



best times for your *family photo session*

Timing is always important to consider when it comes to photography, especially when children are involved. Timing can be the difference between a frustrating session and an enjoyable, memorable photoshoot. So when is the best time to have your family photo session?

DURING PLEASANT WEATHER

If you're planning on having an outdoor photoshoot, try to schedule it during pleasant weather. If it's too hot outside, you might all feel sweaty and uncomfortable. If it's too cold, your kids might complain – and their irritation will likely show through in photos. No matter the season, just be sure to plan accordingly. Bring plenty of layers if it's cold outside, and wear breathable fabrics if it's warm.

AFTER A MEAL

Make sure children (and adults!) are well-fed before the photoshoot. If they're hungry, they might start to get a little antsy and cranky. If you're planning on going to dinner after the photoshoot, give your kids a healthy snack before the session and pack along a few extra snacks just in case.

WHENEVER YOUR KIDS ARE WELL-RESTED

Nothing makes kids grouchy and uncooperative like being tired. Be sure that your family photoshoot doesn't interrupt any of your kids' naptime or bedtime routines.

DURING THE 'GOLDEN HOUR'

The best time for natural lighting is either two hours before sunset or two hours after sunrise. However, if neither of those times is ideal for your children, let your photographer know. Experienced photographers can shoot beautiful photos at any time of day.

tips on: *what to wear*



When it comes to family portraits, one of the most common questions we get is, “What should we wear?” It’s a tricky decision! Since these photos will last a lifetime, you want to make sure your entire family looks as good as possible. But at the same time, you also want them to look like themselves – not wearing stuffy clothes that make them feel uncomfortable. We always recommend wearing clothing that makes you feel and look your best, which can be different for every person. Here are a few other wardrobe suggestions that photograph beautifully.

WEAR COORDINATING (NOT MATCHING) OUTFITS

Make sure your outfits coordinate well with one another. Stick to a color palette of one or two colors. I recommend neutral or muted colors, or darker, jeweled tones. Matching outfits can look a little dated – coordinated outfits look harmonious and pretty. To make sure all of your outfits go well together, try laying out everyone’s photoshoot outfits together the day before.

LET YOUR KIDS HAVE A SAY

Ask your children what they’d like to wear. Asking their opinions will help to make sure they feel comfortable and involved. (Just make sure they know their picks are subject to your final approval – otherwise, you might have a little Spiderman in your family portraits!)

DRESS WEATHER APPROPRIATE

Keep an eye on the weather forecast and make sure you dress accordingly. Choose colors that are appropriate for the season. And if it’ll be chilly during your photoshoot, be sure to bundle up a bit!

A FEW DON’TS:

- While what you decide to wear is ultimately up to you and your family, there are a few things that tend not to photograph well.
- **Patterns:** one or two family members wearing a pattern is okay, but too many patterns tend to clash and draw too much attention.
 - **Primary colors:** Avoid primary colors like orange, yellow and green.
 - **Large logos:** graphic tees tend to distract from the most important part of the photo – your beautiful faces!

locations

There are so many amazing locations to have a photo shoot in the DC Metro area! Whether you are hoping for a picture by the water, a forest trail, or an urban environment, let's find the perfect fit for your family!

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING A LOCATION:

1. Make sure you are choosing a location that will best suit your family's personality. For example, if you love hiking together we may want to head out to the mountains.
2. Consider the ages of your children. If you have super young kiddos, an urban location may not be a great choice. Perhaps an open field or park may be the best location.
3. Take into account the season your session is scheduled for.

URBAN

Northern Virginia, DC, and Maryland have some incredible urban locations that show off our historical architecture as well as some great textures.

WATER

We have several lakes and rivers in the area, and Maryland even has some beaches! What is fantastic about many of these locations is that they are surrounded by trees and water so you get a ton of diversity.

FOREST

Our area has an abundance of forests! If your family loves to spend time in the woods, the forest may be the best location for your session!

MOUNTAINS.

The Blue Ridge Mountains are a fantastic place for photos! This option is weather dependent as many of my favorite mountain locations get snowed in come December; however, if you are willing to drive, the back drop is very rewarding.

OPEN FIELD

Western Loudoun provides many beautiful fields. Fields make a gorgeous back drop for your family photos.



find your happy place





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