

*Tips for Taking Better Pictures
Of Your
Family and Children
TODAY!*



maternity*newborn*baby*senior*family

Photography

is *not* about cameras, gadgets and gismos.

Photography is about photographers.

A camera didn't make a great picture any more
than a typewriter wrote a great novel.

- Peter Adams

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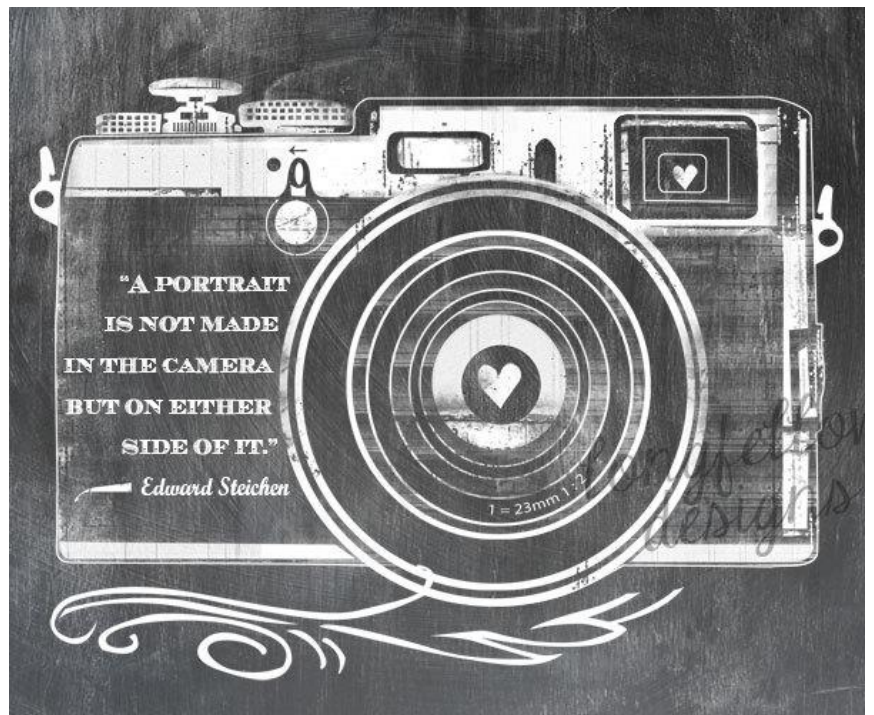
Long before I opened my photography business to follow my dream of preserving memories for families, I was a serious hobbyist who consumed anything I could about photography and how to take better pictures. I bought a nice DSLR camera with a kit lens, and LOVED taking photos of my kids and creating photo

books. I have learned so much since then, some concepts being more complicated than others, but there are several simple things YOU can do with the camera you already own to get better pictures of your subjects and take them from snapshots to great shots!

I have included some actual images of my family to help you see these concepts and show you that you don't need a fancy studio or special equipment to get great photos of your own family.

5 Tips for Taking Better Pictures

1. Look for the light
2. Change your perspective
3. Check your background
4. Show relationships
5. Go for genuine expressions



1. Look for the Light

Light is THE most important element in photography. If there is any one thing I've learned it's to stop thinking in terms of just snapping pictures, but in terms of LIGHT.

Light is what is actually recorded on the camera's sensor, so when you are ready to take pictures of your kids, try and think about the scene and if possible move them toward a source of natural light. There are lots of great sources in your home for natural light, particularly windows and doors. So open up the curtains and position your children close to these sources. If they are playing in a room where you are wanting to capture a candid moment, try and set the scene as best as possible by making sure the blinds are open.

Next, position yourself next to the source of natural light. So if you are using a window, stand so you are between the window and your subject so the camera captures the light falling on them. If you stand with the subject between you and the window, your subject will look dark, washed out, or way too bright depending on how you are metering your light (if you are in AUTO mode, the camera will automatically chose the most neutral exposure/light metering)



This is a photo of my son taken next to the front door. A super simple set up to capture his baby features before they disappeared!



This is in the living room using natural light from the windows. I just positioned myself to be between the window and my son so I could capture the light on his face and get his profile.

This is next to our glass sliding door leading to the backyard. I just asked my son to stand next to the window instead of in the dark kitchen, and I stood between him and the source of the light.

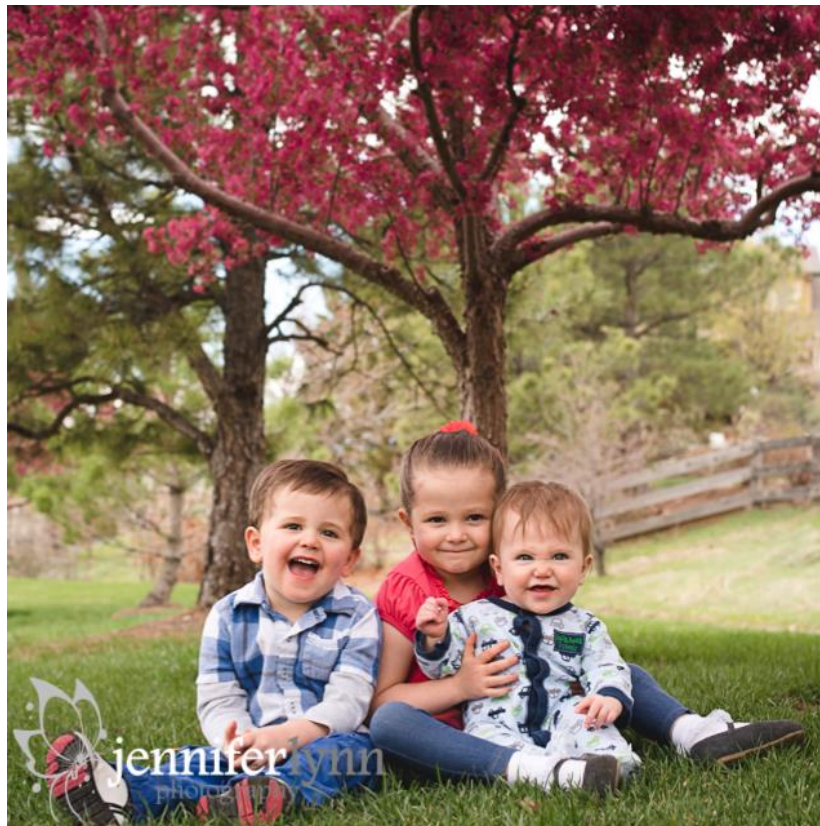


2. Change Your Perspective

If you think about it, the average person takes a photo from exactly where they are the moment they see something they want to capture. Cell phones have made this extremely easy so we are more inclined to grab our cameras and take a picture from our current position.

My challenge to you is to CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE! And especially for children, get down on THEIR level!

You will be amazed at how this simple change will take transform your images. So squat, kneel, lay on your tummy, do whatever it takes to get the camera at eye level with your kids instead of shooting down on them. I promise you won't be disappointed! Once you've mastered this, then you can break the rules and get creative with your angles.



This was an impromptu picture because these trees were just so pink and beautiful. So even though one kid is in pajamas, this is one of my favorite images of all three of them together and I actually had it printed as a canvas to hang in my home.



Instead of taking the standard image of the baby in the crib, I got super low and snagged this cutie's little booty. I also was sure the curtains were open for this so I used all natural light.



This is taken seconds apart – one from her level and one from above. I ended up loving the one from above as this was a great example of breaking the rule, but it was a true overhead shot getting the camera super close to the pole, not a normal looking down angle.

3. Check Your Background

Before you snap the photo, do a quick glance around the frame to check for random objects or clutter that distracts from your kids. The biggest thing I look for is an object that seems to “grow” out of someone’s head, like a distant tree or pole. If you are inside your home, check to see if there are things cluttering your picture that draw your eye away from your child. While I have many photos where the goal was to showcase my kids’ playtime and I left the scene exactly how it was, many times, less is more. So use tip number two and if you can’t take the time to declutter, change your perspective so you see more of your kid and less of the stuff.



Instead of taking a photo of the full patio here, complete with chairs, bathing suits hanging to dry, etc., I got at her eye-level and zoomed in close to make sure the focus of the image was her, which also helped set a unique mood for this photo.



The bathroom can be a mess of towels, bath toys, and just...stuff! But I wanted to get his little chubby legs and first time standing, so I got low (changed my perspective) and made him the focus of the frame. If I'd had a moment longer I'd have removed the toy bin from the wall of the tub, but this was one case where the photo and timing were more important than decluttering the scene.

My daughter was showing me her latest princess dress and wanted a photo. Our patio is covered with a water table, furniture, and toys, so I moved one chair and had her stand in the corner. We got great outdoor light and the scene is decluttered so the focus is all on the princess.



4. Show Relationships

I'm willing to bet if you could show me your favorite images of your family, they would all have one thing in common – a snuggle, hug, laugh, or special moment captured in a photo. These all show relationships between you and your kids or between your children, and those are when you want to keep your camera handy and available to quickly grab it and snag the shot. This is when the moment matters more than the decluttering, but still try and check for light. Sometimes, you can actually recreate moments that you just barely missed because you were grabbing your camera. Ask your kids to give a hug again, or tell each other a secret, whisper something to Dad, or even sit and DON'T smile at each other (they will smile!)

You will never be sorry for keeping that camera out and ready to truly preserve your everyday memories.



All my kids helping daddy get things ready for the grill for his Father's Day lunch. The baby is crying, and the kitchen is a mess (thus I went for black and white to make the focus less the stuff and more the people), but I love the moment. I also ran around making sure window blinds were open to use as much natural light as possible.



All the kids helping baby brother celebrate his first birthday. I love how everyone has such a happy look on their face! One of my favorite memories.



All my kids watching the lions at the zoo. I got on their level, zoomed in to crop out the other people standing around, and angled my camera so light wasn't reflecting on the glass but allowed me to see inside to the lions. I love this true stair step picture of all three of them.

5. Go For Genuine Expressions

I get it, we all want photos of our kids with a happy smile, but some of my personal favorites are also when I caught my kids' pout or just concentrating on a coloring page. Those are true life moments that disappear all too quickly! So don't be afraid to take photos when your kids are less than perfect.

BUT...just in case you did want some genuine smiles without asking them to constantly say "cheese!", here are some tips. Try asking them questions or getting them to talk to you while you take their photo. Ask what their favorite part of their day was and watch their face light up. Give them something fun to do, like tickle each other or throw leaves in the air.

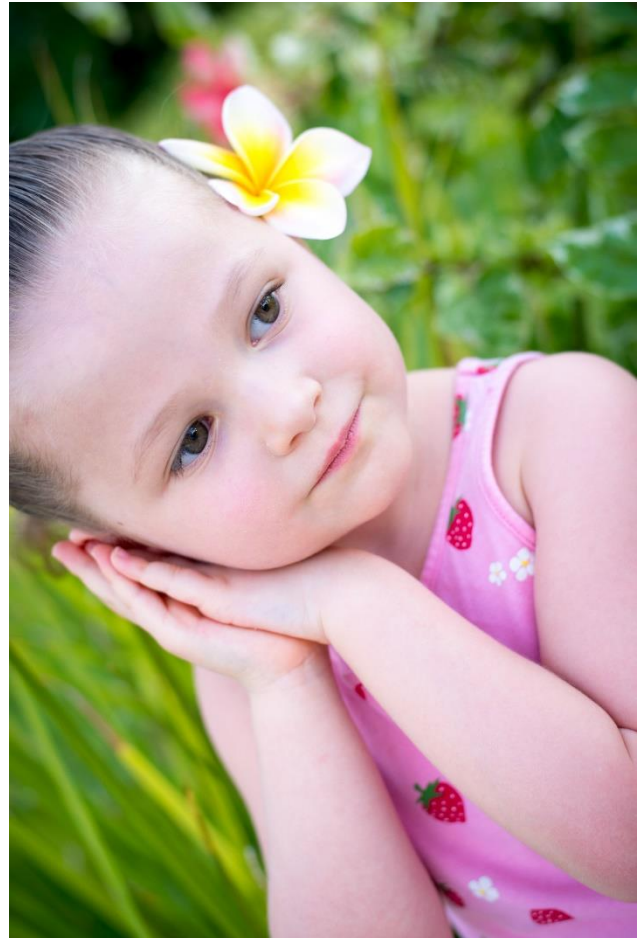
Make it fun! And be sure to have your camera ready for all those other special moments where the expressions are still priceless.



I asked my daughter to give me a pose and showed me the flowers. This is what I got. Love it!



The angry look over Dad's shoulder. He can give such looks when he's mad, but I'm so glad I caught one on camera as it makes me smile every time.



I actually asked her to not look at me here so I could get just her calm expression. I have a smiling photo, too, but actually prefer this one as my favorite.

Want to know more about using your DSLR camera, especially how to make the switch to MANUAL mode? Sign up for the JLP Newsletter to stay informed on the next **“Snap & Chat Workshop”**. The workshop covers:

- How to actually use MANUAL mode
- Understanding exposure and lighting
- Composition
- Focus
- Depth of field
- White balance and more!

Each class includes take home materials, practice time, and snacks and helps give you tools to take better pictures using the camera you already own. So you can get out there and preserve you OWN memories for your family!

Send me an email if you'd like more information or want to make sure you are on the mailing list: Jenni@jenniferlynnstudio.com



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Professional newborn, child, and family photography



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