

Photographer Tips for Taking Great Photos of Kids

Written by Rachel Roland
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Rachel Roland is a mom on a mission - exploring beautiful Arizona (and beyond!) with her two little companions, Jeremiah and Sarah, in search of the best restaurants, attractions, and products for you and your children. See what she has in store for your family today!

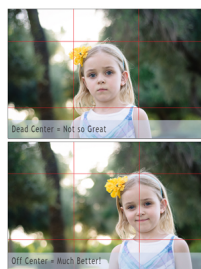


In my line of work, I'm almost always taking photos of my children - and let me tell you...it can be downright *painful* to do so. Why - I don't know - but I asked a photographer friend of mine (Matt Boyd with [Red Phoenix Photography](#)) to share some of his professional tips on how to take great photos of children. Enjoy!

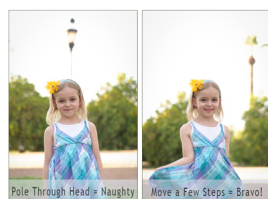
We are happy to be sharing some tips and tricks for photographing kids. Whether you are a beginning photographer or a parent armed with camera, read these tips to help improve your photos. First up, general photography know-how:

1. Know your Camera / Read the Manual. Yes, this is probably everyone's least favorite tip to actually do, but it pays to know your camera. Even if you are letting your camera do all the work (i.e. automatic mode), you can benefit from knowing which mode to choose and why. (Example: many cameras have portrait, landscape, kids, and night modes.)

2. Dead Center is Dead Wrong Unless its Dead Right. As a general rule, photographs are better composed when the subject is not in the very center of the picture. Of course, with anything artistic, rules are meant to be broken. Start with the basics and frame your subject a little off center.



3. Look Beyond Your Subject to Your Background. I can't tell you how many photos I've seen with a lamp post or tree branch running right through the back of someone's head. Beware of your background! It is simple to take a few steps and reposition the camera to avoid a distracting backdrop. Something so simple can make a huge improvement to your photos.



4. Time of Day - Noon is not the best time of day to shoot because it causes harsh shadows. The hour after sunrise and the hour before sunset is referred to as the "golden hour" as it creates beautiful light. Overcast days are also great for shooting photographs.

5. Shoot in Open Shade. What is open shade? It is the shade provided by a tall building or tree; almost anywhere that is not in direct sunlight. Also, beware of speckled shade. For example, if you are standing under a tree, be sure that the sunlight is not peeking through and creating harsh sun spots on your subject.

As a family photographer and father of three, I've learned a few tips along the way to get great photographs of kids.

1. Get on Their Level. When taking pictures of kids, it is best to be on the same perspective. This means getting low to the ground and shooting them at eye level.

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2. Keep Things Moving. Little kids (and big kids alike) get bored easily, so don't force them to stay in one spot for long. Keep things moving - let kids run and play in between photos. And better yet, capture them playing. When I am shooting with young kids, I often keep bubbles in my camera bag. It might result in a great shot, or simply allow the kids to have a fun experience while being photographed.



3. Turn it into a Game. If you are setting out to take some photos of your kids, turn it into an adventure or game. This tip was inspired by our kids themselves, and a particular 3-year old who isn't fond of having his photo taken. We planned a "photo adventure," picked out *special* outfits, hopped in the car, walked to a *secret* location, and played "photographer." My son was the photographer, our daughter the model, and in their minds they were playing a game, not being forced to have their photo taken.



4. Jealousy. Yes, this sounds like an odd photo tip, but you can use jealousy to help when you are photographing more than one child, and one is not cooperating. Take aside the child that is cooperating and photograph them. Give them lots of praise and make them feel *very* special. The hope is that the uncooperative child will see his/her peer having fun and want to join in. Another tip is to have the child who doesn't want their photo taken to help me take photos of the other children. After a few shots, I get the kids to switch spots. Its not foolproof, but it can help with a stubborn child.

5. Take Lots of Photos! In the digital age, you can take as many photos as you want for free. Do it! Kids move fast, expressions change quickly. And while you are learning, it is beneficial to err on the side of having too many photos.

6. Stay Positive and Relaxed! If parents are stressed, kids will inevitably be unhappy. You may not get all your kids posing for the camera at once, but you later will appreciate the pictures that capture their personality and interests. Being goofy, digging in the dirt, whatever it may be, I promise you will enjoy them later!



These are some fantastic tips and I know I'll be utilizing them this weekend while we're out and about - how about you? Thank you, Matt & [Red Phoenix Photography](#) for the great pointers and the beautiful photos!

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Photo courtesy [Red Phoenix Photography](#)

I'm Rachel - a mom, wife, and 'green' blogger at [Small Steps On Our Journey](#). If you want me to come visit your place of business, have any questions on this article or suggestions for a future article, you can email me at rroland@azfoothills.com, tweet me at [@rachelroland](#), or connect with me on [Facebook](#).