

## Expressions Portrait Tips:

Capturing the essence of your child is not always easy. However, Expressions by Ashton Photography offers these tips for getting portraits that capture your child's personality...

**Tip #1:** Parents, come dressed to take a couple shots with your little ones. Sometimes, we need mom and dad to coax them into the "FUN".

### Pictures of Newborns

We suggest getting portraits done within the first 3 weeks. Photographing a newborn before 3 weeks is ideal because they are sleepier and more limber to pose. There is no going back to those first few days with a brand new, sleeping baby. You have years of ambitious children with eyes open and excitement streaming from head to toe, but the moments to capture the beauty of a newborn are very short-lived and priceless. From 3-5 weeks old, they are more alert and try to resist our poses. They try to lift their heads but most babies are just not strong enough to hold up their heads for a long enough time to capture them. Most babies start cluster feedings, getting acne and dry skin appears; this is why we recommend early or later appointments, but all kids are different. Whenever you decide to take your newborn's pictures, we will work as hard as we can to capture their beauty.

Please bring extra bottles and diapers.

Don't forget to bring special blankets, hats and toys for their portraits.

### Pictures of Toddler

Photographing toddlers is a delicate process but with a couple tricks, you can have a successful photo shoot. A well-rested, healthy & fed child is on the right track to happiness; also the right time of day does wonders. We suggest that the first sitting of the day or after an afternoon nap. Child Psychology comes in very handy when dealing with 18 month -3 year old children... Try to get your toddler in the mood to photograph by saying how fun it is. Please do not pressure them to perform a certain way... when kids feel they have the freedom to do something that is their idea, they attack it with full enthusiasm; pressure makes them shut down in the studio setting. Never suggest that it is scary or stressful and give yourself plenty of time to arrive to the photo shoot on time. We like to ease a toddler into the mood by giving them some face time with the photographer. Please do not set the toddler on the stage without easing them up there while holding them. We make slow transitions with your child in order for them to feel comfortable enough to separate from the parent, forcing the child is counter-productive to our process and may force the child to shut down completely. Mom or Dad, come dressed to take pictures, in case your little one wants to start with you in the first few pictures. A sense of security is the bottom line with these little ones.

### Check Out The Backgrounds

Coordinate outfits with backgrounds you like. We have a wide selection to choose from. It's important to take your child's complexion, outfit colors & backgrounds into consideration when deciding. Some of our backgrounds are on our website, many others are not. If you get stuck, bring in a couple outfits and we will help. We love to give advice.

## **Keep Outfits Simple**

It's very common to struggle with this one... Wear clothes that you feel comfortable in.

**RULE OF THUMB:** If you like yourself or child in a certain color or outfit, you will love the picture.

If the outfit is both bright with busy patterns, it can detract from the most important parts of the portrait -- your child's face and expression. To ensure your child is more prominent than the clothes, try outfits with solid colors or simple patterns. Combinations of patterns can be fun too... like checkers, polka dots and stripes in complimentary colors. Layering clothing for boys is really stylish and adorable, add a hat to spice it up. Overalls with no shirt is still a favorite with most parents. Little girls look adorable with headbands and tutus; try to hold off on the tutu until they are 6 months or older, then they can really show it off. Sandals, shoes, boots or barefoot? Think of the entire look that you are going for. Play around and have fun; maybe let your child pick one outfit (shows their personality) and you get to pick the other.

Family outfits can be casual, vibrant or mismatched. Most people think you need some brilliant themed outfits in order for the shot to work. We disagree.

Some Family Picture Outfit Ideas:

\*Let everyone pick their favorite t-shirt and jeans and go barefoot.

\*Little kids get a sweater that has a variety of colors and the adults can pull solid colors from the sweater.

\*You could do polka dots on one, strips on another, checkers on the 3rd, maybe solids on one or two people.

\*Everyone has a different primary or pastel color on.

\*Do it up formal style: Black, white or Brown with silver, cream and gold accents look great together.

You get dressed; we'll get the smile.

## **Bring A Favorite Toy, Snack & Drink**

Taking pictures is a lot of work and sometimes a short break is needed to refresh your little model. We offer sitting times of 30-45 minutes. This allows your child plenty of time to get comfortable.

Not only during the sitting, but afterwards. Kids are in heaven after they work really hard modeling to have a yummy reward waiting for them.

## **Take Your Child's Schedule Into Consideration**

As a parent you know when your child is at his or her best. Children's portrait sessions should be scheduled for a time of day when they are well-rested and alert. If the timing doesn't work, don't be afraid to reschedule, we want to capture the best pictures possible and sometimes a reschedule is necessary. As parents, we know that our plan is not really the plan.

### **Postpone The Haircut**

Plan haircuts one to two weeks prior to your child's portrait session. The day of the session is not the best time to experiment with a new hairstyle or hairstylist.

### **Stay Calm**

Children can tell when adults are anxious and nervous. Make sure to be calm and relaxed about the picture session, the children will feel the same. No expectations usually result in a great experience.

### **Let us do the work**

Our photographers are trained to handle children. Sit back and enjoy watching us capture giggles and smiles. And if they don't giggle and smile, enjoy watching the interaction. Sometimes these are the most cherished portraits because they show your child's natural expression and personality coming through. And don't worry about their behavior or reaction, we will ask for help if we need it, otherwise we think too many cooks in the kitchen distracts the chef and subject.

### **Plan Out Your Package**

After your sitting, kids and parents are worn out. Plan out what size pictures you will need so all you have to decide is which pictures to keep and what images to give people. This will take a lot of the headache out of ordering pictures.

#### Make a list and save it for future portrait sessions:

Dad & Mom: 16x24 wall canvas, 11x14, 8x10 (office), 5x7's of favorites for home & wallets

Nana & Papa: (1) 8x10 and 2 wallets

Grandma Lillian: (1) 8x10 and 1 wallets

Uncle & Aunts: (4) 5x7

Friends: 2 sheets of wallets

Coffee Table Book: 6x8 of my favorite pictures

Preserve the session forever: CD w/ all the images

### **Have Someone Pick up the Kids or Come Back Later To Order**

So many times moms or dads tackle picture taking alone and it's a lot of work to focus on what you need to order while managing your worn-out little ones. Have Grandma or Dad take the kids to the toy store or home so you can focus on ordering pictures.

Don't forget, we can always put the pictures online for viewing and have you come back later to order if that would be easier.