

I've previously written about the topic of photographing babies and children from the perspective of someone who has had his services engaged to photograph other people's babies - but the last month has presented me with a different opportunity - to becoming a digital camera wielding parent - a very different scenario.

Jul 29, Milestones: When should you photograph your baby? You want to photograph your baby every moment. Although I truly believe that parents should have point and shoot cameras with them at all times, I believe that professional photos can be an amazing addition to remembering these amazing moments. With that said, and perhaps even the given economy, hiring a professional photographer can be well, a little overwhelming should you desire pictures every single day. The beauty of a mommy to be, a gift from above and truly a work of life. Many photographers offer complete baby plans which may include a maternity session. These sessions are amazing! Trying to figure out sleep. Trying to figure out a lot of things. This is the most unbelievable time to have your baby photographed. Most are looking to have their newborn photographed naked with perhaps an artistic pose. Newborn babies that are just a few days are able to be posed, comfortable naked as long as they are warm and their bellies are full, and cute as can be. During this time as a parent of 2 I know this we are too tired to truly appreciate the tiny toes, the blistered lips, the wrinkled back. Your photographer will be able to capture all these tiny details, and create some amazing artistic images. Your baby is changing by the day! As mentioned before, we probably won't be taking our children every 5 minutes to a professional. I recommend the next time your child makes strides in their development is the best time to bring them back to your fav photog. At 3 months, your baby is now smiling! Yep, they know who you are! Babies at this age will smile and interact a lot. This is something that they did not do as a newborn. Some babies will also be able to have some tummy time. When positioned on a pillow or my favorite photography prop, the Boppy, a month old will be able to place their head up and perhaps peak a smile just long enough for that quick capture! If you are finding that your baby is within this age group and is not yet ready for belly time, which is perfectly fine, wait, YES WAIT, until these shots are possible! This is a great age and one of my favorite to photograph. Again, if your baby is not yet sitting up, wait a few weeks until that is possible. Please know that sitting up with a parent's help and balancing does count! Make sure it is safe and an assistant or parent is near by to catch the lean! Little ones may also enjoy some added clothing for this age. What no photo here? Well for a reason. Remember we want to count milestones right? Well, if you capture baby at 6 months, and then at 9 months, not too much has changed. Maybe crawling, and if you want that captured great. If you want to wait, I tell my clients to wait until something is different. As much as your baby has changed since they were born, the older they are getting the more subtle the changes are. I would much rather wait until they are 1, now that is for sure a milestone! This is a milestone for sure! Never fear if your baby is not walking yet mine were both totally different you will want to get their portraits done at 1 year! Some of my clients will wait just a couple weeks after their birthday because they know for sure they may be walking. Again, it is up to you. I encourage you to stay connected with your photographer. Imagine the images, the collages, the montages capturing your baby from the bump, to 1 year, to after? Your photographer will be able to have all those milestones and create some amazing products you will cherish forever. You will want to capture your toddler and child again at milestones in their life. I encourage every 6 months after they are 1. Once they are 3, time appears to slow down a bit and most of my clients intend to shoot once a year, some still remain on the 6 month time frame. As a professional myself, I have the luxury of shooting my kids many times a year. Like most, I offer incentives at different times of the year to encourage more priceless moments for my clients, take advantage of all those opportunities as I have NEVER heard a parent complain that they have too many pictures of their child! I was born and live in wonderful So Cal. I love what I do and I am blessed to have some of the most amazing clients and work in the greatest industry ever!

Chapter 2 : 21 Creative Baby Photo Ideas | Brit + Co

this photographer is really good. i like how calm and in control she was even when she was working out her settings. nice to see how the pro's do it.

Krystal Griffin We have four kids who all arrived within five years. There was a season of my life that all I knew were pre-schoolers, toddlers and babies. I learned a few tricks that helped back then, and in the many days since, I have learned a few more. Make noise behind the camera. The ideal photo would include the children looking right into the camera. What often happens is that you get their face but not a connection in the eyes. They are looking out of the frame at something else. When making a noise, either yourself or with a toy, aim to keep it behind the camera. Shake the rattle behind the camera, not right next to it. Make noises or play peek-a-boo behind the camera as much as you can. It sounds like a small adjustment, but you would be surprised what a big difference it makes in the photo. Hold down the spot. This is good for encouraging a child to stand where you want them and be still long enough for the photo. Point to a leaf, sticker, coin, rock, bug or anything you think might hold their interest. Tell them you have a job for them. Whatever it is, they can keep it once they are done with their job well, maybe not the bug. Krystal Griffin Photography My nieces are so cute! Lay down babies and toddlers. Rather than expecting your toddler to be good at holding the baby even though they are almost babies themselves, sitting up with good posture, and staying where you place them, you need to place everyone on their backs. If you keep using this trick, you will even find there are some variations to prevent your photos from all looking the same. Have the child sit to limit mobility. Once your baby starts to walk, they turn into a toddler – literally! Try a chair, bench or other piece of furniture. Now, strong warning here! Make sure he is safe and someone is close by while he sits there. With that said, they are a bit more stuck when they are seated on something. You will have a little time to grab a few frames before they figure out to get out of there. Extra hands always help when taking photos of tiny people. They can steady baby, wipe noses, remove distractions and put children into the photo. The helper also needs to be willing to act the fool for those kids. Try to keep the goofy antics behind the camera, it keeps the kids looking inside the frame. Take advantage of any chance you can get for this help. Ask a friend when you are together for a play date to give you a hand, and do the same for them. Krystal Griffin This photo has little to do with these ideas. Take time to document all these cute parts as your kids move through their stages of growth. Choose your timing well. Moms and dads, I know that you know your stuff, and you know your kids. But sometimes we get so busy with our plans and agenda that we forget some of the obvious things. Do your best and it will go a long way. With something in their belly, plenty of rest and full up on the love and attention tank, your children will be more apt to show you the most enjoyable part of their personality. Place baby in a container. Two reasons for baby to go in a container: A basket, seat or box can give baby some support and the toddler can sit next to it. If I had gotten more creative and let go of the ideals I had of the perfect sibling love photos, I might have gotten a few more photos. When baby is old enough to crawl or walk she is stuck in that container. She can move up and down but her mobility is limited just like when she is in a chair. Now you have a moment to capture that picture. Play music on the phone, behind the camera. Kids love music at any age. If there is a song or artist you know they love, turn it on and hold it behind the camera. I leave you to your imagination on that one, but I will attest that it always gets at least a smile and usually a laugh. Like I said before, you need to engage either their eyes or ears to get a connection to the camera. Harness the power of the technology in your hand to do that! Find a lava lamp, kaleidoscope, or any moving colorful app. If it makes a little noise – even better! Just make sure you hold it as close to the lens as you can so they seem connected to you and not something out of the frame. Krystal Griffin Putting them on their backs added a lot of flexibility and safety. Not to mention removing stress from the situation. Try bribes, but not any old bribe. Anybody have a grabby child? Sometimes that tendency is fine, but when it inhibits your photos you might try a bribe that keeps their hands busy. Just like with standing on something, you need to find an item that they want: Tell them that if they can hold the items one for each hand the whole time you are taking a picture, they may keep it when you are finished. But they must hold it tight and not let go or let anyone see it. As they are getting to the point that

they have any idea of numbers, you can start telling them to count the clicks. I feel this does two things: Helps them to feel there is an end in sight. You will not go on forever. Knowing this seems to keep them engaged long enough to get a photo. The counting keeps their minds busy, giving them something to do. When they have something to do you have longer to take a photo. Chances are they will either be in a better mood or start to understand the routine of taking a photo. Krystal is a stay-at-home mom of four children, ages , whom she homeschools. She is acutely aware of how fast her children are changing and is passionate about keeping family memories alive through photographs. You might also enjoy:

Chapter 3 : How to Photograph Children Outdoors

Thanks for sharing links on baby's photography, it is true that photographing a baby wont be not as easy as shooting portrait of an adult => Anyway, i have a content that would be useful for your site.

Surprisingly enough, things like gear, location, social media skills and post production have very little to do with it. Here is the common secret all five photographers shared that makes their work stand out. Any successful photographer will tell you the most common question they get asked is "What lens do you use? Much to my astonishment, their answers all revolved around two things: I think my photography attracts attention with its simplicity. What made me successful is the fact that my pictures are due more in need of creation than observation. I invent a story in my mind and the children play the role of a hero in the scene. My pictures are mostly staged and I think the key is that I always try to tell the children the story I want to introduce. I feel what has made me stand out and brought on the popularity of my work is the amazing, soulful, and serious expressions I capture. Patience is a virtue - take the time to get to know your subject. Talk to them, be interested, ask questions, be silly! Good things come to those who wait. Have [their] mom and dad wait in the car - getting the child away from their parents is so important. It allows them to relax and be more natural with you. Try this little trick: The camera suddenly disappears from the scene, and any stress that it may have caused will melt away. Tell them to relax their face and think about something that makes them happy. On the count of three, have them open their eyes and look at you. THIS is when you take the shot. With a little luck, you will get a fresh, genuine expression and the perfect picture. The hardest thing for me was getting cooperation from the children I worked with. I know it is the expression that makes a photograph. Additionally, capturing a story goes hand in hand with the expression. It helps put a vision in your head to spin off of. These two things are far more important than anything else if you want your work to stand out. Here is how I do it: As soon as a child meets me for their portrait, I get down to their level. I squat, sit, kneel, whatever it takes to make them look into my face. Then, if I can, I show them images of what the parents have already discussed and what they want to create. I show the child what we are going to do, and let them know its magic and that they have to listen to every word I say. I tell parents in advance not to say anything and in most cases have them stand directly behind me. I shoot from the ground so the eyes go in the right direction. That is my big secret to the best poses. Photographing kids and shooting at very large apertures to get the creamy bokeh makes this difficult. I always try to capture movement for more narrative images. What I find helps is asking them to play with dirt or throw leaves etc. I shoot at six frames a second on a Canon 5D mark III to capture movement and then I select or combine the best aspects of certain scenes into one exposure. Meaning If I like the falling leaves in one shot but the expression in the other I combine the two images. After talking with each of the photographers, I had to take a step back in astonishment. You learn the most from them.

Chapter 4 : Baby Pictures: How to take professional looking baby photos

If you are a professional photographer or simi prof photographer. Do not use a group image where people care about each other. (maybe in full size) but since you cut your golden cut, you have some finger from another person.

I have several outdoor areas near the studio that we can use for outdoor portraits. If you have somewhere special in mind, like a park or a farm, just let me know. Our children session is designed for any age from 1 day to 17 years. If you are interested in something more specialized for newborns and capturing the first years in portraits, please review our Baby Steps Program. Children sessions can be for one child or siblings. During the session there is no extra charge for photographing siblings separate and together. Multiple outfit changes are allowed but we may not use all of them. After your session is done, a proof book is created for you to order from about weeks later. When you pick up your proof book from the studio you will schedule an appointment to order your portraits weeks later. An online gallery is also available for family members that may be out of town and cannot get together to order. Orders are complete and ready for pickup within weeks. Please contact us to discuss investment options and book your children session today! The Baby Steps Program may be started at any age before 2 years old. Children over 3 are not eligible for program. Either a pre-natal portrait or newborn session is recommended. Either a newborn session or month session is recommended. Either a month or month session is recommended. Either a month or 1 year to 18 month session is recommended. Either a 1 year - 18 month or 2 year session is recommended. I have several outdoor areas near the studio that we can use for outdoor portraits as they get older. Baby Step sessions are designed for one child. Please contact us to discuss investment options and book your Baby Step session today!

Chapter 5 : Top 5 Children Photographers and Their Secrets | Fstoppers

How to Photograph a Baby or Infant Baby pictures are treasures, but taking pictures of a baby can be daunting: They don't take directions, cannot be bribed, and are supremely unpredictable. This sort of photography is more like wildlife photography than portraiture.

Want to learn in depth how to take gorgeous photos of kids? In this baby photography tutorial video we cover the following topics: Complete Studio or Home Set up Amazingly soft Portrait Light using a Double Umbrella Equipment needed for the shoot simple and inexpensive also can be used for Portraits and Fashion, see the complete list below 2 poses with many variations Tips on working with a baby Tips for photographing a baby: With infants over 3 month old use the lowest power setting to minimize the negative impact. Instead increase ISO and open the f-stop. High Powered Strobe is bad for newborns. When the baby is born, billions of brain cells that have developed while in the womb, begin to make first connections synapses. Stimulation of the brain begins with sensory experiences. One of examples would be when child is observing the contrast between light and dark shapes. This fires up the neurotransmitters which create connections as they travel from cell to cell forming a network. The network of these connections corresponds to intellectual capacity, memory, problem solving, and language. But just imagine what happens when watt per second of studio flash power is being released into a baby face? I am not an expert on neurology, but in my opinion, flash will create a sudden sensory overload, most likely misguiding neurotransmitters and frying some cells, eliminating the opportunity for successful development. Based on my hypotheses, I would not recommend using flash to photograph newborn babies under 3 month at all. Reserve to natural light, or continuous light instead. However, by lowering the power below ws, it does not seem cause any visual reaction. As you might have notice, Sammy did not exhibit any reaction to strobe pop, at all. Crank up your ISO " and carefully focus so you can keep you aperture open, so that you can control your exposure with ISO and f-stop, as appose to flash intensity. Trust me the grain in the image is definitely better than brain development complications. More info on baby brain development: Making connections helping children build their brains. I used a double umbrella for this photo shoot. Double umbrella is a translucent umbrella and white reflective, or silver umbrella taped together at the ends of the stem. Most of the umbrellas have an option of black cover to be removed. By removing the black cover the white reflective umbrella turns into translucent. Be ready to shoot. The baby will generally only grant you with a few minutes of good behavior. Test your light and exposure prior to the first shot, use a doll or a soft toy to preset focus and exposure. How to Make Baby Smile: Happy baby is the one who had his nap, was recently fed, is dry and comfortable. Babies instinctively will produce a social smile " meaning that if you smile at them they will smile back. Ask the mother to stay right behind the camera. This might be obvious but never shake the baby, shaking can cause brain damage. Once again, do not use your strobe at a high power setting. If the baby has any type of reaction to the flash pop, it means that the power setting is too high. Secure the photographing area, in case of a roll over, make sure there is no hard surfaces or objects for the baby to get hurt with. Studio Equipment for baby photography: A-clamps where used to secure background fabric to the telescopic poll. You can get them at any hardware store. Alien bee B flash unit. Bogen Telescoping Cross Bar The most convenient and versatile background holder you will ever find. It can hold any roll of background paper up to 9 feet wide. You can hang all sorts of fabric backgrounds on it with A-clamps. Manfrotto B Basic Light Stand. Great heavy duty stand. I used 2 of them is this shoot one was holding the light the other was holding the bouncer. I had a lot of cheap stands in the past and they all died. This stands survive all the abuse and still perform like new. Maximum height is 9 feet. They fold really small and extend to 6 feet 2 inches. They can hold a studio light with umbrella or small softbox. These two stand where supporting the crossbar C , but I was worried that my 3 year old would knock them down. As she was running back and forth behind the set. So I would only recommend them for location use, for studio the D stands are better, they are more sturdy F: Calumet 45 inch Umbrellas. Also these are the best quality umbrellas I own. I have used these for more than 10 years and they are still in great shape. These are very versatile. Or two can be hooked up together with tape for single light " double umbrella set up as was done in this video I

also used it during a heavy rain, once, coming back from a shoot. Kept me dry, True story G: Vivitar HV Flash Oh yeah they still make these. I think I have mine for about 15 years. I use it as a background light quite often. It can be used as on camera flash as well. It takes any type AA batteries 4. I use rechargeable Sanyo Eneloop Hybrid Batteries with all my flash units, they seem to last the longest, and do not die when not used. Please note that to sync this unit wireless with your main flash you will need an optical slave peanut the flash will sync wireless within feet from the main flash unit H: It bounces light back onto the subject filling in shadows. Can be used with any light source. I often use this when I shoot portraits and still life. Sometimes I use it as a background or surface as well on small still life shoots or quick head-shots. One side is white the other is gold. White canvas backdrop, it wrinkles a lot so I always keep it out of focus. Canon 40d camera was used to shoot these images. I used my 7d to record the video. I think, I like 40d actually more than 7d because it has less color noise and finer grain on lower iso. White sheer This is thin, translucent fabric, It was used to place over the heavy cotton backdrop J. Produces a light airy feel. You can use regular sheer curtains or for larger set order by the yard: I used 20 yards of inch wide fabric. Two humble guys trying to keep you educated and entertained.

Chapter 6 : How Photographers Help Parents of Stillborn Babies

Select the Type of Photograph. If you want to capture multiple moments, you can surely go for documentary photographs and capture several shots of a baby with different relatives or in different rooms.

So it makes sense that many new parents want to share it with their loved ones and keep a record for years to come. But we crave something a little more creative than the standard albeit totally adorable shoot. Make Photoshop Your Best Friend: Singlhild Nystrom really lucked out when she was born to photographer father Emil Nystrom. Her dad flexes his major photography chops , as well as his imagination and Photoshop skills, to place her in a wide range of backdrops and crazy situations. If you have the same abilities, this is an incredible way to photograph your child, and will give you plenty of hilarious photos to flip through as they grow older. But what takes this photo series from generic to extraordinary is how she sketches new worlds around her child using Photoshop and good, old-fashioned pen and paper. The Endearing Designer 3. Be The Best Parent Around: He chronicles the early years of his daughter Alice Bee with some hysterical images that Breaking Dad photo is priceless. Check out his flickr profile to see all the glory for yourself. Break Out the Chalk: We love this creative chalkscape from Cute Moments Photography. Sketch out your favorite backdrop, then get ready to pose. We envision a stunning photo display for a classy black and white addition to any nursery. This is a literal take on letting your nestlings take flight. The photo series, entitled Flying Henry , uses natural scenery, Photoshop and props to create portraits that appeal to the child within all of us. Ethereal, whimsical, and magical, they are sure to be a treasure for many more years to come. So it should come as no surprise that we had to find a spot for them in this roundup. Mom Queenie Liao might be the queen of creative naptime photos. Her photo series of son Wengenn, entitled Wengenn in Wonderland , is a gorgeous take on baby photos. As baby Wengenn naps, she constructs fairy-tale like landscapes of cloth, blankets, and pillows full of giant bunnies, romantic dinners with teddy and a carousel in the clouds. How Wengenn sleeps soundly through it all will forever remain a mystery. This mom takes doodling beyond the paper and onto her baby using Photoshop, of course. After photographing her child, she scribbles in fun accents and plenty of color to create masterpieces that evoke all the fun creativity of childhood, without any of the mess. Pretty as a Fairytale: Bringing a new baby home is kind of like introducing a royal presence into your life, and we love how this photo shoot reflects just how magical a child can be. Boring old photos just not creative enough for you? Invite Any New Addition: When mom Kelli Higgins finally brought Latrell into her life as her adopted son, he was already ten-years-old. The effect is funny and incredibly sweet. Watching his personality and expression begin to take shape reminds us just how fast life moves. Use the photos when your child is older to show her just how precious she was! Capture Sweet Naptime Dreams: Theo and Beau , another favorite, relies only on the incredible cuteness of a toddler and puppy to steal our hearts. There is something so simple and sweet about a boy and his dog, napping the day away. Bring in the Watch Dog: Babies and dogs are a match made in heaven and it gets even cuter when your pet thinks of your child as a member of the pack. A photo with your pooch standing guard will include everyone in welcoming your newborn to the family. A Study in Size: Clearly the big dog, tiny baby combo is hard to beat for winning photographs. Take Them Under The Sea: Who says your baby photos have to stay on earth? This unique underwater seascape, made from blankets, towels and a few small props, is just whimsical enough to make you forget about the real world above. Bring Them to Your Favorite Movie: Your children will grow up without many of the classics you had. Adopting is a wonderful option for couples and families, and it still means plenty of love your new child, as this photo demonstrates. As photographer Kate Parker puts it best: This couple and their photographer neighbor spent a rainy day doing the stereotypical newborn shoot with their dog instead for fun. The cheeky photos and that flower headband! What does your perfect newborn photo shoot look like? Have you seen any other super creative portraits that have to be shared? If so, link in the comments below! Nora Landis-Shack Nora is a writer, photographer, foodie and feminist. Want to Learn A New Skill? Check out our Online Classes. Choose your new Skill Today! So many to choose from, how will you choose just one? Must be a valid email address!

Chapter 7 : 10 Tips for Photographing Babies

How to Photograph Kids, Babies, Children: A Portrait Tutorial Photography Buying Guide on Amazon: Photography Tip: Photographing Your Children (Part 2) - Duration.

First moment with Mum, first bath, first time on the scales he was just under 9 pounds , first outfit, first manicure he had long nails from day one , first time meeting grandparents etc. Quite a few of our friends have commented on the nice balance between styles. Finding the Angles One of the biggest challenges in photographing babies that I know many of my friends struggle with is finding a good angle to shoot from. Add to that the complication of the bumps, marks, scratches and misshaped heads that newborns also tend to arrive with and finding a flattering angle that will make more than just the proud parents ooh and aah can be difficult. Get Down Low “one key to many natural baby shots is to get down on their level. Close Ups “another way to improve the angles and make your shots seem more intimate is to get in close by either physically moving in or by using a longer focal length. Try a number of positions over the shoulder, sitting him up, laying him back in arms, lying him on his tummy etc as each one opens up different possibilities. Go Macro We all love newborn babies because they are cute and small if only they stayed that way. As a whole they are cute but they also are made up of many little cute body parts that present a photographer with an array of wonderful subject matter “especially if you zoom in on them. Sleeping, feeding, pooing, crying. They may not smile yet but there are times in a daily routine which are better than others for photos. Keep Your Camera Close Our baby is pretty predictable in terms of his daily routine we seem to have got him pretty settled into one already somehow but there are moments all day long that he does something cute, disgusting, funny and worth capturing. We tend to leave our DSLR in our livingroom where we spend most of our time with him but also have a point and shoot in the bedroom for other shots. Befriend the Airbrush A lot of shots that you see of babies in Flickr are quite amazing in how smooth and perfect they make them look. Little scratches, sleep in the eyes, snotty noses, dried milk around the mouth, blotchy skin, birth marks and bumps etc are common for all babies. You might like to keep a warm, wet face washer handy to wipe away some of these things but in some instances they will come out in your photos. However at times they can be a little distracting and for those special shots that you might like to give as gifts you might like to do a little photoshop retouching. Take Out the Color Another tip worth considering for a little photo editing is to tweak the color of your shot. This has been useful for a number of reasons: It softens your shots somewhat. Babies are soft, cuddly little things and taking the color out in this way accentuates this. Similarly you might also like to experiment with de-saturating the colors in your shots to a lesser extent than going black and white. It also gives a fairly natural looking shot. The other strategy would be to diffuse the flash a little by putting some tissue over the flash. Firstly timing your shots is important.

Chapter 8 : How to Photograph a Baby or Infant: 12 Steps (with Pictures)

Children cannot care less for photo production and the importance of the long lasting blog.quintoapp.com any child really wants is to have fun. The art of working with children is to structure the photoshoot as a play.

Two months later, the two women would become founding partners of Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep, an organization of volunteer photographers worldwide who take pictures of stillborn babies or babies who are expected to die shortly after birth. Where babies die and parents grieve. Infants are usually the most lovely and endearing subjects, sweet and fresh, brimming with early hints of the people they will become. Cheryl wanted to embrace her boy skin to skin, Mike explained. No wires, no breathing machine. After he died, Cheryl picked up her baby and held him to her chest. In a powerful black-and-white photograph, Cheryl Haggard holds her son to her chest, his arms folded one over the other, her lips gently touching the top of his head. She played the DVD over and over again, admiring her son. Maddux had some of the physical traits of her three other children, Chase, Anna and Natalie. It was sweet, it was painful. And what other parents should have, too, Cheryl thought. Early on, photographers were sent off on their assignments without training. And they are given guidance on how to retouch images. Physical anomalies are left as isâ€”therapists made it clear that it would be important for families to see any problems that caused their children to dieâ€”but bruises can be removed and skin lightened. Some hospitals were concerned the group was going to take advantage of bereaved parents. Others questioned how healthy it was for parents to pose with their babies, put photographs up in their homes and continue to remind themselves of a painful loss. Though there will always be plenty of squeamishness and judgment when it comes to death and how people grieve, clinicians and therapists say acknowledging babies who die, bonding with them and remembering them is healthy, not harmful. In a study published in , Katherine Gold, a researcher at the University of Michigan, found that parents overwhelmingly report that photos were important to them and many wished they had more. Jeff and Lori Tieger have only a handful of treasured snapshots of their baby, Daniel, who was stillborn on Feb. Hospitals are now contacting the foundation directly, looking for names of photographers in their area.

Chapter 9 : How to Become a Baby Photographer (with Pictures) - wikiHow

Children are one of people's favourite subjects to photograph, but like any subject they present their own photographic challenges. Let's take a look at a few ways to get the best possible results with photographing children in outdoor conditions.

Why Natural Light is Best Children, like anybody, look their best when photographed outdoors in natural light. Soft, natural light gives the face a more natural and pleasing shape, makes the skin appear softer and removes ugly harsh shadows. Firing a flash will often make babies and younger children blink or even cry. Also, flash will generally flatten the skin and eliminate the subtle shadows that give a face depth and realism. Baby Waving with Parents in Background by Tampa Band Photos , on Flickr When looking for suitable outdoor light to take photos of children, keep in mind that the midday sun is very harsh and will cast unflattering shadows. The best times of day for outdoor portrait photography are the early morning hours and the last hour before sunset golden hour. The sun will be low in the sky which will be very flattering to your subject, since the light will create a soft, golden glow. Find soft light coming from one side and you can hardly go wrong. If you absolutely have to do your photo-session during the middle of the day, there are a few ways to make it work. First, do your best to stay out of areas with bright, direct sunlight. Instead, look for places with open shade to shoot in. Position the child to have open sky in front of them to properly illuminate their face. You can also use a fill flash or a portable reflector to fill in shadows that are a bit too dark. How to Make it Fun and Spontaneous Children have a short attention span and most of them will simply be unable to sit still for very long or follow complicated posing instructions. The environment of an indoor portrait studio can be intimidating for the child and ultimately a frustrating place for the photographer during a child photo-shoot. So a fun outdoor setting such as a park, beach, their own back-yard or a beautiful garden can instantly help put a child at ease. While well-intentioned, this might actually backfire and cause the child to need extra time to relax and just be themselves. Stiff poses and cheesy smiles are not what you are going for, so it is imperative that the child feel relaxed and view the shoot as a fun event. An outdoor portrait session can allow you to get some great action shots such as the child joyfully running in the grass, digging in the sand at the beach, playing with a colorful toy and even with other children. In some ways, a great and spontaneous photo of a child is more of a documentary than a portrait. Kids, like adults, are individuals and one of your goals should be to capture their uniqueness in your photographs. One way to help facilitate this is to take some time to get to know them prior to the photo-session. You will quickly learn if they are shy, outgoing, serious, studious, especially active or funny. You can then brain-storm fun ways to portray these traits in your photos. Keep in mind that babies are almost always at their best in the early part of the day. Fatigue at the end of a day will usually make a baby fussy. Also, if the mother feels comfortable with it, capturing a photo of a baby nursing in a beautiful outdoor setting can be especially touching. In order to really draw focus to the child as your subject, it is a good idea to set your camera to aperture priority mode. A good aperture to start with is f5. In lower light situations you can go up to ISO if you find that your shutter speeds are just too long. However, going over ISO can start to cause a lot of digital noise in your portraits. A fast shutter speed is essential if the child is in movement at all. If you are shooting in aperture priority mode and your shutter speeds are too long, you will have to make adjustments. A zoom lens in the mm range is a good all-purpose lens for shooting portraits of children. This will allow you to have some distance from the child but still fill the frame. Additional Tips and Tricks Always pay attention to distracting elements in the background of your shots, as well as any other unwanted details. Also, paying attention to details will pay off later. A loud, patterned or striped shirt might distract the eye and take attention away from the subject. Whatever your ultimate creative goal, keep in mind that kids feel more relaxed in casual, comfortable clothing rather than formal wear. Since you will want your outdoor portraits of children to be relaxed and spontaneous, carrying around minimal gear is a good idea. Keep in mind the weight and bulk of your lenses and other camera equipment so that you can follow your subject around freely. Finally, always take lots and lots of pictures. If you simply wait camera-in-hand for the best moment you will likely miss it! Keep on taking lots of shots and vary angles and

distance throughout the session. There will definitely be some out-of-focus or undesirable shots, but you will certainly end up with at least a few gems in the end. Venosdale , on Flickr Rachael Towne is a photographer and creator of Photoluminary. About the author is a professional photographer and creator of Presets Galore.