

BABIES AND CHILDREN

Babies and children teach you to work quickly with a camera. It's all about capturing that special expression.

BABIES

The arrival of a new baby is a great time to start digital photography and a good reason to learn to cover every aspect from handling your camera to editing, filing, printing and sharing online.

If you do not learn to file, store and print digital photos; children may never see their baby photos later.

LIGHTING AND BRIGHTNESS

The key to good baby photos is to use soft lighting such as a nearby window. Turn the flash off (p.18-19) and *slightly* increase the brightness (p.16).

This gives an effect called 'high key' where a *slight* over-exposure softens the baby's face and reduces shadows. A simple background of white rugs or sheets adds to the effect.

MOVE CLOSE AND WAIT

A baby does not have strongly defined facial features, so you can



move in close with the camera without much distortion. Aim your camera, half click the shutter to avoid a delay and wait for that expression.

A baby by itself is tiny, so try a close up of parents holding the baby cheek-to-cheek. Babies have regular habits so learn what time of day they are most lively and happy.

MOVIE CLIPS

Don't forget to shoot a few movie clips regularly of children growing up, and file them carefully (pp44-45). Movie clips can be combined later into a short film which you can burn to a DVD.

CHILDREN

Sort your camera out before you start to photograph, as children have a short attention span and will not wait for you.

Using **wide-angle zoom** gives more range of focus and more tolerance with composition. Take time to watch them at play so you can then shoot quickly as you try and anticipate their actions.

SHOOT AT EYE LEVEL

This is the most important thing to remember when photographing children, even if it means lying on the ground. It also helps to get children interacting directly with the camera.

PROPS AND BACKGROUNDS

Children love things to do, so have plenty of toys around, clothes to dress up in and colourful cushions and rugs in the background or pets to play with.

LIGHTING

Soft lighting is best, to enhance soft skin.

Outside Follow children around when it's slightly overcast and you can shoot photos from any angle without harsh shadows.



Taken with only window light.

Inside Let children play near a large window and use the soft lighting, increasing the brightness on your camera a *little* if you need to (p.16). If you have to use flash, do not use 'Red Eye Reduction' as the time delay may kill the spontaneity with children.

There is no better way to learn to use your camera than chasing children around trying to photograph them. Start an album to collect your best shots and always add names.

If you are keen for a real challenge, try photographing a teenager! We often forget to record those years. Try photographing them when they are engaged in an activity or ask them to take their own self-portrait.

extra tip

Internet search key words: 'babies + photos + tips' or 'children + photos + tips'

tip

The more regularly you photograph your child, the more they will become relaxed with the camera. Remember to include parents, grandparents and the child's friends in the photographs.

'Take photos of your children, but be careful not to idolize them'
– Nan Hogg