

# FIVE TIPS FOR FANTASTIC PHOTOS OF KIDS

Quick Guide

Written by Karthika Gupta



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We've all heard the dreaded words, "Okay, everyone, look at the camera, and on the count of three, say 'Cheese!'"

I know I have been guilty of using this technique in my early days as a family portrait photographer.

I remember coming home from client photoshoots and kicking myself for not being original, botching my client's experience, and getting mediocre images that lacked any emotion or connection.

Over time, my photography style evolved, and I started investing more time and effort in making my client families and kids feel comfortable before, during, and after their photoshoot.

The results were images that were fun, fresh, and full of emotions – precisely the kind of pictures that I want in my portfolio.

My clients love the experience, and I often hear them say, "Oh, that was so much fun!" or "Thank you for making it so easy," and "I loved how you made us feel at ease." I realized that if I, as a photographer, was having a good time interacting with and photographing my clients, they were having a great time, too.

At the end of the day, my job as a photographer is to take great, meaningful, and beautiful pictures for my clients and make sure they have a great time, and that it is a pleasant experience.

To that end, there are some things to keep in mind to capture your client's families and kids' connections.

 **Recommended Reading:** If you'd like to learn how to create amazing portraits, grab a copy of Photzy's premium guide: [The Art of Portrait Photography](#).



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Photograph by Karthika Gupta



Photograph by Karthika Gupta

*Shoots that are multi-generational are super fun. Getting kids of all ages to act like kids is the key to having a great time and creating some unique images.*

1

## UNDERSTAND FAMILY DYNAMICS

It is imperative to understand family dynamics before the photoshoot.

This critical knowledge goes beyond the typical questions about the names and ages of the kids. Try and understand the likes and dislikes of the people involved.

When kids and young children are involved, take the time to understand the kids' personalities as individuals and with their siblings.

Is the family casual and easygoing, or do they like formal, traditional posed pictures? Just because they like a particular style of imagery does not mean you have to stick to that. But certainly, incorporate what they want first and then feel free to experiment.



**Key Lesson:** Develop your skill with judging personalities. Family dynamics will almost always affect your success when photographing children!



Photograph by Karthika Gupta  
*Click through the activities.*

*You never know when  
you might get that killer  
shot – the one that makes  
everyone go “aw.”*

2

## STRUCTURE THE SHOOT

Trust me, this is key and will ensure you maintain your sanity during the photoshoot. Have a plan of action.

I make it a point to spend the first five minutes of every session educating both the parents and the kids on what they can expect.

The first few minutes are warmup time; I test the light, figure out the right lens, etc. I let my clients know exactly what's happening, and many times, I get a lot of beautiful images during this time. Clients are much more relaxed if they think these first few minutes don't really count.

**◆ Key Lesson:** Be aware of your clients during your set up time. They will often relax and provide an intimate moment or expression that will not be revealed when they are aware of the camera.



Photograph by Karthika Gupta

Then we incorporate an activity like walking along a path, climbing a tree, or playing in the park, and I photograph around that activity.

Finally, we just sit down to enjoy each other's company.

This activity lets the clients know exactly how we are going to spend our time and helps keep me in check. Because let's face it, for most of us, once we start clicking that shutter, it is so easy to lose track of time!



# 3

## MAKE IT FUN FOR THE KIDS

Making it fun is a critical part of capturing connections among family members during the photoshoot.

For family portraits with little kids, try techniques like tickle-fest, blowing bubbles, rocking out those dance moves, and other such methods to get the kids in the spirit of having fun.

If kids are a little older, try cracking jokes. Bring some basic props if required, and let the kids play. Photograph around the activity and capture candid moments of family interactions.

If all else fails, it is okay to set up the shot and work the family into the pose. Make sure to keep clicking so that you can get some candid photos throughout the whole process.

Photograph by Karthika Gupta

*Who can resist climbing trees, or even jumping? These playful activities capture childhood so well.*



Photograph by Karthika Gupta

Remember that families that play together stay together.

Your job as a photographer is to capture these family dynamics in a fun and pleasing way.

Suppose your clients have a great time during the shoot. In that case, it is more likely that they will love your images because they will remember the experience in a positive light.

 **Key Lesson:** There is no more important ingredient to photographing children than keeping it fun, especially when working with younger kids.

# 4

## KNOW WHEN TO CLICK AND WHEN TO BACK OFF

This one is a game-changer; when photographing kids, you must understand when to direct the client and when to back off and give them a break.

Kids will not be as good as adults in continuously taking direction (yes, I know there are exceptions to the rule, and sometimes adults are worse than kids!).

But sometimes, just sometimes, it is entirely okay to skip that insane urge to freeze the frame and instead BE in the moment.

This decision ensures that both kids and their parents look at the photoshoot as a fun experience and not a chore.

Trust me when I say that it makes for some incredible and heartwarming images when you do finally get some great shots.



**Key Lesson:** Continuously shooting can wear your client's energy down. Take breaks.



**Recommended Reading:** If you'd like to learn how to create amazing portraits, grab a copy of Photzy's premium guide: [The Art of Portrait Photography](#).



Photograph by Karthika Gupta

*Here are many kids of various ages, which calls for some running, awkward hugs, fake fights, and then this; a beautiful portrait of siblings and cousins that will be cherished forever.*



# 5

## EMBRACE THE CHAOS OF CHILDHOOD

This one is a little hard to digest because, as photographers, we tend to be perfectionists.

The lighting has to be right, the styling has to be perfect, and the angle and composition have to follow the allowed rules. You know, all those things that we learn in Photography 101, Photography 201, and perhaps even Photography 301!

But guess what, all of that doesn't quite matter when you have all of three seconds to take the shot.

Sometimes it is okay to break the rules and just go with the flow.

Yes, every frame here will not be **PERFECT**, and more than likely it will break all the rules of photography, but having a good mix of fun and posed images in the client portfolio will make for a well-rounded family photoshoot session.

Children, just like adults, want to be

Photograph by Karthika Gupta

*It's best to capture childhood in a fun and entertaining way for all.*



Photograph by Karthika Gupta

treated right, have fun, and have lots of laughs. It is as simple as that.

When kids have fun and are allowed to have their natural personality shine, the images speak for themselves. Stuffy and stuck up never goes over well with kids.

So instead, try to relax and focus on having a good time.

When kids pick up on that positive energy, they also relax and focus on having a good time. The net result is photos that parents love and that you are proud of as a photographer.



**Key Lesson:** Relax and let the children be children. Those moments are where the magic happens.



Photograph by Karthika Gupta

 **Self-Check Quiz:**

1. Should you push your subjects to get the image you have in your mind or let them be comfortable?
2. Why is understanding the family dynamic important?
3. Should you have your camera ready during the setup time?
4. Why is it vital to make the photoshoot fun?
5. Is taking a break unprofessional?
6. If a child is running around, should you force them to sit down and be still?

 **Assignment:**

The best way to start learning child photography is, to begin with, photographing kids that you know. These kids could be your own or perhaps the children of neighbors and family. Concentrate on your techniques of reading personalities, letting go of being rigid, and being ready to capture the special moment when revealed!



# Hey there!

Let's get real for a minute... Learning photography can be super challenging! But we're here to help you every step of the way! Here are 3 of our most useful (and **FREE!**) photography resources:



## 3 Free Photography Cheat Sheets

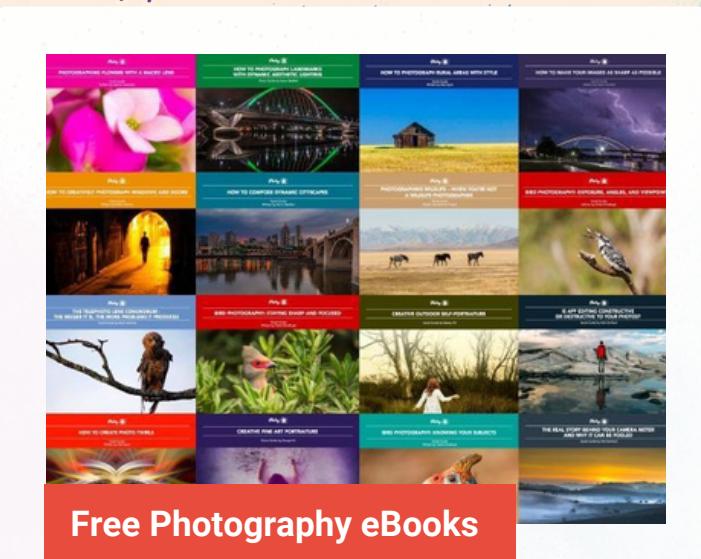
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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Karthika Gupta is a wedding, lifestyle, portrait, and editorial photographer based in Chicago. Her style of photography is fun, fresh, and organic. She strives to capture authentic emotions and interactions among her clients and emotive imagery in her commercial work.

She loves connecting with other creatives and photographers and is always ready for an engaging conversation about photography and the art of storytelling.

She can be found online at [www.karthikagupta.com](http://www.karthikagupta.com)

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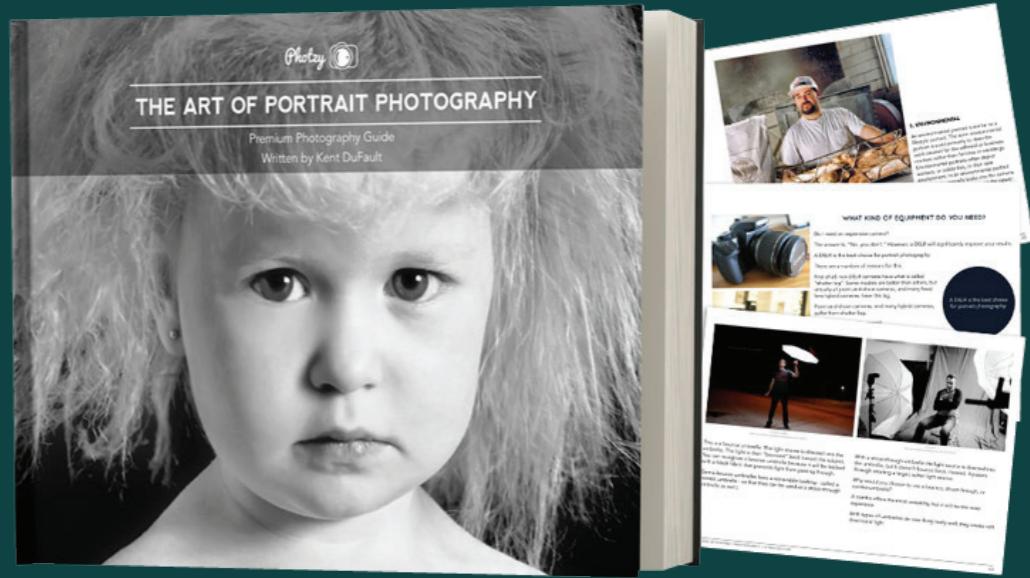
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