



**5** easy ways to take  
better photos of your kids  
(on your phone)



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# 1. They don't need to smile

If you ask a child to say “cheese” for a photo, you’ll often get an awkward, fake smile. One of the best bits about documentary photography is that you don’t need the kid to smile for an authentic portrait. Instead, focus on their eyes.

Resist the urge to say “smile” and you’ll end up capturing kids ‘just as they are’. These are the shots you’ll want to look at over and over as they capture the best memories.





## 2. Get down to their level

This tip will improve your photos instantly. Crouch down to your kids' eye level and shoot 'squared up' if you can, so not at an angle but facing the kids directly.

So often we take photos of children from our viewpoint - up tall, looking down at an angle. But a good photo makes you, the 'viewer', feel like you're part of the action - and getting down low does this nicely.



### 3. Find your background and ... wait!

A great documentary-style photograph of kids doesn't 'just happen' - even though it may look like that. Sure, the moment itself is spontaneous, but the photographer has most likely anticipated the moment by lining up her camera to where she thinks the action will take place (the background).

Then, just wait. Don't run after kids with your camera; let the action come to you! If you miss the shot the first time, don't worry. Kids often repeat their behaviours, so remain put and wait a little longer for them to do it again.



## 4. Capture a real moment

Get your kids immersed in play in the park or doing an activity they really enjoy, such as digging for wiggly worms in the garden.



The more time they spend thinking about that, the less time they'll spend getting distracted by the camera and will start to display natural and relaxed emotions. Wait for that moment when they look up and laugh/ think/ frown (they don't have to be happy all the time!) and snap away.

Try getting older kids to whisper jokes to each other; this breaks the ice and can lead to genuine laughter.



## 5. Find good light

If you're indoors on a dark day, ask your kids to hang out near a large-ish window so the natural light can flood in and illuminate their faces. They may not stay put for long so be ready (getting down low, lining up the camera) to capture what you can.

Outdoors in harsh midday sunshine is tricky, the kids are bound to be squinting. Get your kids to run around under the shade of a large tree, the light will be softer on their faces.

Or, if you can, wait until the 'golden hour' just before sunset and shoot into the sun - with the sun behind your children so it back-lights their hair and bodies. This makes for beautiful, magical portraits.





## Now... what to do with all those photos!

Now that you've taken all these amazing photos of your gorgeous children, what are you going to do with them? It's so easy to keep them hidden on your phone or on a memory stick in a draw, but treat yourself to some tangible print copies as a keepsake memory. If nothing else, do this for your children who will look back on them in years to come.

Print your favourites out and peg them up with a piece of string in your kids' rooms. Or perhaps create a little wall collage or photo album with them all included. Children grow up so fast - you'll want to treasure memories of their childhood forever.



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