

HOW TO TAKE AMAZING PICS OF YOUR KIDS WITH YOUR PHONE

SHANNON GARBACCIO PHOTOGRAPHY



COMPOSITION: RULE OF THIRDS

Out of a variety of composition techniques, the “rule of thirds” is a classic. To enable on an iPhone, Settings>Camera>Grid. On Android: Camera>Settings>Grid>3x3. Simply line up your subject up along the lines and or the intersecting points on the grid. Fun fact, math is what makes this composition so pleasing to the eye.

LEADING LINES

Be observant! Look around for lines that you can use to lead your viewers’ eyes to your subject. Leading lines can be, anything that helps point your eye to the main subject. Have your kids help you look for lines using tables, window sills, trees or driveways, etc, then position them. We generally read left to right so position your subject to the left in the frames if using horizontal lines.



FILLING THE FRAME & NEGATIVE SPACE

There are so many fun ways to shake things up in your photos, like filling the frame with your subject or using negative space. When done well, these composition techniques make for very cool photos. To fill the frame, allow your subject to fill the majority of the frame. To use negative space, your subject will appear small, some places to use negative space might be using the sky or a grassy hill.



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STORYTELLING

Consider the story you want to tell with your image and which elements in the frame help add to your story or detract from it. You may need to move objects out of the frame or add them to help tell your story. For example, for a story about distance learning you can include all the materials on the table with the kids. It may be messy, but captures your life as it is.. On the other hand, if you are taking a simple portrait of your child, you might want to remove clutter so your child is the focus.

PERSPECTIVE

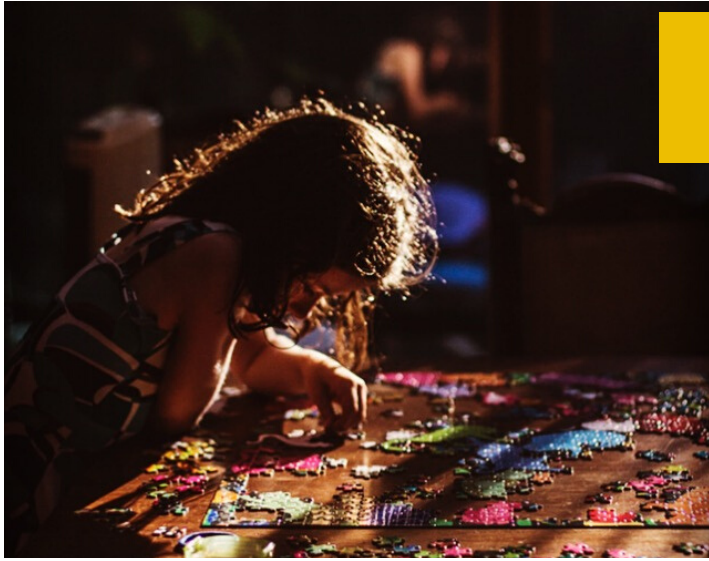
Change your perspective! Get down to your kids eye level, get down and look UP at your kiddo or stand on a stool to shoot them from above. This will add a lot of visual interest to your photos. It's especially helpful to cut out clutter or visual elements you don't want in your shot. Play around, try moving around your kids to explore different angles



DECISIVE MOMENT

Be patient. Have a vision in mind of what you want to document. Be prepared with your preferred perspective and then just wait. If you let your kiddo lead the way, prompting them as needed, they will be more inclined to cooperate, and it will be more fun for everyone. Enable live mode on an Iphone or use burst on an Android to capture all the action. You can go back later and choose the best shot of the series. You can go back and ask your kid to do something again, I do it all the time!

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TYPES OF LIGHT (JUST A FEW)

Observing light and learning how to use it is one of the best things you can do to make your photos better. I personally am riveted by and obsessed with pretty light. Learning to use light takes practice. Experiment with it and have fun as you learn. There are many types of light, I will focus on some of my faves.

The top two things you can do immediately to improve the look of your images. First **turn off your flash**. It creates harsh unflattering light and odd shadows in your photos. Second, **turn off your overhead lights**. Overhead lights creates raccoon eyes and cast unflattering shadows..

Your kids will not always set themselves up in the ideal light. So, you can either literally put them where you want them to take photos or you can work with the light you have. In a photographers world, light is everything, so we move mountains to get our subjects in the perfect light. In real life you just do the best you can with the light you have. Study your home at different times of the day, see where the light comes in and how it acts. This will give you some ideas of where to put your kids for the prettiest light.

Window light gives you a lovely soft light with shadows that fall off gradually and is one of my favorites.. You don't need big windows, a small window will do. Position your subject facing the window for a soft even light or for more dimensional light position them perpendicular to the window creating some more dimensional light.

Garage light - Believe it or not, your garage is the perfect spot to take photos. If you position your subject right on the line where the light starts to fall off to shadow, the background will start to disappear leaving your eye to focus only on your subject. You can deepen the shadows in your editing process.

Rim light (pictured above) You can see how the light creates a little light rim around the subject. This is achieved by having a bright light coming in at an angle to your subject or directly behind your subject.

Back light - This is when a bright light like the sun is directly or close to directly behind your subject. The best time to use this light is when the sun is low in the sky or when you can use objects like trees to filter the sun if it isn't very low in the sky yet.

CONTROLLING EXPOSURE

One great thing about today's camera phones is that you have some control over the exposure and focus. This knowledge alone will up your photo game exponentially.

When you are ready to take a photo, simply tap the subject that you want the camera to focus on. The camera will respond by focusing on the spot you touched. On an iPhone, a little sun icon comes up when the focal spot is pushed. Slide your finger up to increase the exposure and down to decrease the exposure.

On an Android, tap the spot you want to focus on, and a scale with a lightbulb will appear at the bottom. Slide left or right to increase or decrease the exposure.

By holding down your finger on the focal spot you can lock focus and exposure which is helpful with a fairly stationary subject, with moving pets or kids, you'll just need to keep tapping where you want the camera to focus as they move around. To release the lock, just tap again.