

6 Tips to Excellent Family Photos

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I know! It's tough to think about taking or scheduling family photos with a photographer. You have to

- ✓ Deal with husbands not being very excited (or even reluctant)
- ✓ Think about what everyone is going to wear (colors, styles, etc.)
- ✓ Try to lose those extra 10lbs (if you are anything like me).

Here are some tips that will help:

1. What to Wear

Pick an outfit that you LOVE and feel you look your best in. Choose colors that coordinate (not matchy matchy) with yours. An example is you have a shirt with blue and yellow on it. You can have your husband wear blue and your son wear blue or yellow and the same with your daughter. 2-3 colors is key. Also, think about your home where you will hang your portrait. If your home is browns and beiges or earth tones and you choose to wear pastel colors, it may not look the best on your wall. Think about layers and accessories like sweaters, scarves, headbands, hats, etc, as they can add a modern twist and sassy flair to your images.

2. Sleep and Eat

Sounds simple but it's true. Everyone (and I mean everyone) looks better in photographs if they got a full night's sleep. Additionally, if kids or especially husbands are hungry, you won't get a lot of cooperation or happy images. It's a lot to schedule and arrange for portraits, make sure that everyone has slept and is full. Also think about bringing some snacks that won't mess up clothes. Examples would be crackers or those orange fishes. If you have a sucker or candy, it can not only get on the kids clothing, but sugar is the enemy for good portraits.

3. Pretend the photo shoot is ½ earlier

All the rushing around that takes place prior to leaving the home is crazy. Moms always make sure that kids and husbands are ready and help with that. Then, they think oh, I don't have time to do my hair (pony tail time). If you tell your family and plan for the photo shoot to be ½ hour earlier, you'll be on time and calm. I like to encourage mothers to have their hair and makeup professionally done. This will prepare mom for her pictures and when mom is feeling pretty and confident, this will reflect on the rest of the family as well.

4. Help for Dads/Husbands/Significant Others

I know that many dads dread the family photo session, so I often suggest that moms let dads know that this is a gift that will make you happy. Perhaps suggest that if he goes with the flow for this, you will not complain about the football/baseball/basketball he watches every weekend — or insert whatever is his special "unwind" time. For my husband it's fishing. I always say he can have a whole day of fishing with no complaining from me, if I get one little photograph. It works like a charm!

5. No "cheese" Please

So often I find parents urgently telling their kids to smile by saying, "say cheese" or getting frustrated. This almost always results in stiff, fake smiles. Don't stress the kids or yourself out, just let your photographer handle it — that is our job. Simply step back, relax, and allow the photographer to naturally interact and talk with your children. This will result in natural, gorgeous smiles.

6. Have fun

Pretend the camera isn't even there. Just interact with your family by picking up your children and tossing them in the air or whispering to your husband how much you love him and appreciate him for being there for your family. Have fun, laugh, joke, kiss, giggle, embrace, snuggle, and play. Doing these things will allow the photographer to capture the emotion and true beauty of your family. This will result in beautifully natural photographs that you will treasure for generations to come.