

PLANNING A FAMILY PORTRAIT SESSION



Family portraits require the photographer to be prepared. Groups, and especially large groups, will find it difficult to be patient if the photographer is not prepared.

SUBJECT APPEARANCE

CLOTHING

- Ask the members of the family to plan their outfits, even bring a change of clothes. As a general rule, it's visually more appealing if all the subjects dress in similar color tones.
- Avoid having extremely bright clothing -or- only one member wearing bright colored clothes- unless- aiming for a specific style requested by the subjects. Avoid patterned clothing.
- Remind them to wear clothes they feel comfortable in (not too tight, short, warm, etc).

MAKE UP AND ACCESSORIES

- Keep it simple. Stay away from trendy makeup or accessories. They will make the picture look very outdated once the fashion trend goes away.

EQUIPMENT

PROPS

- Bring -or ask the family to bring- toys and games that will entertain young children. This can help keep them engaged and cause smiles and/or laughs from the entire group.
- If shooting outdoors, bring a towel, or paper towels, in case someone gets sweaty or dirty. A blanket is also helpful, if there are going to be any pictures taken while sitting on the ground.
- Bring hair accessories for people with longer hair. A hair tie, and a brush, are helpful for windy conditions.
- Bogspray, a small portable mirror, and a duffle bag to store purses, shoes, etc. (so they don't get lost - especially if shooting outdoors) are helpful touches.

GEAR

- Using a tripod helps you frame the photo first, then take your eyes off of the viewfinder, and engage the family members eye to eye. Creating a connection with the family is important.
- Unless shooting a large group, stay away from wide-angle lenses. A safe focal length is in the 50-135mm range.



There is an ideal time for outdoor family portraits: 45 minutes before sunset until 30 minutes after sunset. Sunrise is trickier- allowing only about a 20 minutes window after the Sun breaks the horizon.