



# how to choose your CHILD'S photographer

pixel perfect photography's  
*'how to' series*



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# *Choosing your photographer*

## **what to look for, what to ask**

Maybe it's been years since you had some great photos taken of your child, maybe it's something that you've just never done. You do know that you want something special. Maybe it's an occasion or maybe you just know that you want something different than you've been able to capture yourself. You want to be sure that you select a photographer who is compassionate, competent and experienced. But, finding the right person is a daunting task, especially with all the disruption that goes hand-in-hand with managing children on a daily basis, not to mention everything else that you have going on in your life. What do you look for in a photographer? What questions do you ask? While price is always a consideration, we know there are other things you should look for, too, because you shouldn't entrust capturing your child's life to just anyone. Choose the wrong photographer and you could waste time and money. So, we've put together a list of things to consider and questions to ask and how to go about looking for a photographer, so you'll feel armed with the information to make the right decision for you and your family.



## Where to Look



First, check around with friends and family. Does anyone have experience with a photographer and what was that like? A childrens photographer should be someone who is a great people person - with the parents as well as the child. He or she should be someone you enjoy working with. If you belong to a mom's group or forum you may try asking there. Do a web search as well and be sure that you check out the photographer's website as well as their Facebook page and their blog. Websites tend to be more static, whereas a Facebook page and blog should have samples of their most recent work. Once you've settled on a prospect, call and ask them to tell you more about their services. A good photography studio should provide you all the information you need to determine if their studio is a fit for you and you should also be able to determine, from the conversation, if the

studio is one that you will want to do business with.

## Style

In looking at the photographer's work, does it draw you in? Are the images pleasing? Are they images that you would like of your own child? At our studio we strive

for real expressions and genuine emotion in our children sessions

- backgrounds, props and even clothing are really just window dressing (though they can certainly add interest and even keep a child involved which can be incredibly helpful).

We want to capture your child as he or she is - the smiles, the silly antics, the funny faces, the serious looks - all those things that make your child as unique

and special as he or she is. Finding the magic in your child is always the backbone of our personal style. You may not know exactly what you want in a session for your own child but you will have an idea of what you like when you view portfolios. To view our work online:

- [pxpfoto.com](http://pxpfoto.com) (website)
- [facebook.com/theperfectpixel](https://facebook.com/theperfectpixel) (facebook page)
- [pxpblog.com](http://pxpblog.com). (blog)







## Experience

How experienced is the photographer? Not just how long they have been in business but how long they have specialized, or even if they specialize. And, if you have more than one child be sure to check whether the photographer has a good amount of experience photographing siblings because that type of session certainly presents unique challenges with which a photographer should be familiar.

Different types of photography call for very different skills. If a photographer is a great event or wedding photographer it does not necessarily translate that he or she will be a great childrens photographer. With experience and specialization comes specific skills and consistency, and the ability to 'think on the fly' in any situation because almost every situation has been encountered at one time or another.

Children are all different but if you have worked with hundreds of them you understand and can anticipate patterns. This is a huge benefit because children, whatever the age, have a fairly short window of opportunity and it helps immensely to know exactly what you are doing and to confidently move things along. I can't tell you how many sessions I have photographed where the parents want to take me home with them because I can calm children, I can often anticipate what they will do and I am really good at soliciting a variety of expressions. Children are super comfortable with me because - here's my big secret - I adore them. And they know it. I love what I do, have the patience of a saint (so I've been told), and have the confidence that comes with having photographed thousands of children (it's that many) over 10 years. This is the type of experience you want to look for.



## Personality & Fun



Do the photographer's portraits show a sense of fun? Are there a variety of expressions? Do you get the sense that you can see the child's personality? Do the children look relaxed and comfortable? At our studio we do everything we can to make it a fun experience. There are toys and games to play with, snacks for you and them, all kinds of fun props, and it's an all-around comfortable place to be. We spend time getting to know your child because the surest way to great pictures is by making a human connection. Talk to children on their level and you get a lot back. We have an excellent understanding of what children of all ages are capable of and what makes them tick.

We strive to make every session enjoyable so that we can focus on bringing out your child's unique personality. These are all things to look for because they make a difference.

## Time

How much time is your photographer willing to devote to your session? Different age groups call for different requirements and, generally speaking, a photographer needs to allow more time than you might think to ensure that

clients are not kept waiting and that the photographer

is available when the child is ready. For example, we schedule a minimum of 90 minutes for toddler session, but often only get 30 minutes. And, we never schedule sessions back to back if we can help it. We always schedule more than enough time because we know - from experience - that sometimes things happen. Clients can be unexpectedly late, sometime a child needs a break that no one planned for and sometimes things just take longer than anyone

can anticipate. Children move

at their own pace and we move with

them. A childrens photographer should have a good understanding of the needs at all ages and plan accordingly.





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## Policies



**Does the photographer guarantee his or her work?** If not and you are unhappy then you may have no recourse. We guarantee our portrait products and our services, including your photo session. If we should need to re-do the session or part of a session for any reason then we reschedule at the earliest convenience for all parties. If there is ever a problem with an order we will fix it, re-do it or refund your money. No fussing, we just do what is necessary to make sure that you love your portraits. We only want happy clients and that is something to look for in whoever you are considering.

**Is there a charge for session reschedules?** Children are sometimes unexpectedly sick. Or just have a bad day. We know this and so our policy is that if you need to reschedule, you reschedule.

This causes us to juggle our schedule sometimes but we find that this is the best possible policy for our clients and they do appreciate it. Children need to be fed, healthy, rested and happy for their sessions and we do everything we can to make sure that they are.

**Are parents allowed to watch during sessions?** We hope that you are not only allowed to watch but included as a part of the session, unless we are photographing an older child and we think that they'll do better with just us in the room. Usually, though, Mom or Dad are the best attention-getters that I have, not to mention spotters when I need one.

**Are other family members allowed to watch a session? Can they be included?**

Usually our childrens' sessions do not have a limit on the number of children to be included, so there's certainly room for all the children in the family. We also have no problem with others attending the session, so long as we keep commotion and attention-getting to a minimum (small children especially are easily confused by too much going on all at once).



**Does the photographer offer on-location sessions or are sessions in-studio?**

We conduct most of our childrens sessions in the studio because that is the most efficient way (for you, the child and us) that we have found to run the session. All our supplies, equipment and props are close at hand - and that is huge, because you never know what you may need during a session; also, we can control the lighting situation exactly which allows us to concentrate on you and your child and not the lighting. We do offer on-location services for older children. If you're interested in those, just ask us.

**When is the studio open?**

What days is the photographer available? During the week? Weekends? Evenings? What are your needs? The caveat here is that photo sessions should always be scheduled at the best time for the child, and often that is earlier in the day. And, here's one of my golden rules - 'nobody under 4 (years) after 4 (pm). It works pretty well for everyone, younger children are often exhausted later in the afternoon (the older the child, the more tolerance they have). So, though in our studio we do offer evening appointments we don't generally schedule young childrens photo sessions in those timeframes. We do offer Saturday appointments and our advice is that if you need a weekend try to schedule well in advance or call us - reschedules that create openings in our schedule do happen.



**How will you view your pictures?**

In our studio, you will return (usually) the week following your photo session to view your images in our awesome multimedia room. We're able to show you multiple images at one time in life size so you can pick your very favorites. And, we're experts at helping you narrow things down and at finding the best possible package for your needs. Once you're familiar with our process we even offer remote viewings if you live a distance from the studio. Different photographers have different services, though, so best to check what is offered so you know what to expect.

**What is the turnaround time for orders?**

A reputable studio will have a reasonable turnaround time for orders. Some products may take longer than others, depending on vendor lead times, but overall turnaround should be a matter of weeks and should be consistent. In our studio, it actually took a lot of effort to get our turnaround time to 2-3 weeks consistently. There are products that have longer lead times but we are very up-front when lead times are longer, and for some products such as photo cards turnaround time is often within days or a week. What you are looking for is reasonableness and consistency from anyone that you may work with.



## ..... How to Choose a Childrens Photographer .....

**Is retouching included with all purchased products?** Children are all beautiful but often their skin or stray hairs need a little help. You should understand whether retouching or other services - such as conversion to black and white - are included or additional. We include expert retouching and conversion to any duo-tone such as black and white with all our portrait products, but be sure to check this one out.

**What is the studio's practice regarding file retention and file management?** Are files retained indefinitely or is there a deletion policy? If you don't place an order within an expected time frame you want to be sure that you know what the studio's policy is in regards to retaining files. Our studio generally will retain files on orders not yet placed for 30 days but if you have different needs you only have to let us know. Also, we will retain forever the files for any portraits that you do order.

**Lastly, does the studio back up critical files?** You want to be sure that there is no possibility that your files will be lost or accidentally deleted. In our studio, our files are backed up in a minimum of 3 places, one of them off-site. We've spent a lot of time, effort and money on our backup processes, it's one of those things that as a client you never see but you want to know (trust me) that a studio has adequate resources to properly manage and maintain your precious files.



**What about portrait products, pricing and financing?** Different studios offer different products and packages and pricing. Some studios are able to offer a wide variety of products, some studios keep offerings to a minimum so if you have particular products you are interested in it's best to ask. Different studios also offer different packages and have different price points so it's best to ask what you can expect to spend at a particular studio.

We happen to offer a great variety of portrait products. We also offer great deals on session fees for children to make it really easy for you to try us out. And, we offer interest-free payment plans for your portrait purchases. We hold the financing so we can manage the plan to suit your needs - it's not a layaway, take your portraits home while paying for them comfortably over time. Our clients love this about our studio because we make it easy for them to buy what they want. Here's a few of our resources regarding products and pricing:

- contact us and we'll send you our Inspiration Guide - **603-579-0500** or **info@pxpfoto.com**
- check out our products and services and ballpark pricing online at **pxpinvestment.com**
- check out our childrens offerings at **pxpfoto.com/specialties/children**
- check out our children's session deals at **pxpfoto.com/coupons/childrens\_coupon.html**

So, you can see that there are lots of things to consider but we hope that we've given you a road map and some good information to help you make the best decision for you and your family. **If you have questions or if you'd like to talk to us about our childrens photography we'd love to chat! Give us a call at 603-579-0500 or send us an email at info@pxpfoto.com.**

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view our childrens offerings at [pxpfoto.com/specialties/children](http://pxpfoto.com/specialties/children)

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