

Photographing Kids in Digital the Easy Way

First, consider indoor photography of the child or toddler. Discuss with the mom your photography plans. Parents always want quality images of their kids. She will need to help you. Ask her advice on best time to photograph, clothing, accessories, shoes, favorite toy and where to do the photography. Avoid black or white attire. Select a background in the house such as a fireplace or a colored paper or cloth background. Enlist as many helpers as possible. While mom gets the child ready, ready the photographic equipment. Two umbrellas with strobes are excellent and portable. The approximately 1 meter size is great. For child portraiture try about 70mm focal length at ISO 200 and 1/200 second shutter with two umbrella flash units. Have the lens at maximal aperture or close to that. Many pros have one umbrella right in front of the model and at about 8 feet in height. The second umbrella is best at 30 degrees to the right or left and a bit lower. The idea is to have a high-key lighting set up for maximum softness. Modeling lights are nice but not necessary if a simple scheme like this is used. A pair of low output umbrellas with modeling lights is about \$500. Similar hardware for an umbrella that utilizes the photographers own electronic flash is about \$60 with 2 meter stand. These items are in the B&H Catalogue under lighting equipment. The modeling lights are made by Photogenic. This is a quality manufacturer of lighting equipment. Use a low tripod and remote switch or hand hold the camera. If the child is young, photograph from the floor. Watch for those irresistible expressions. Watch the histogram as you capture the images. A flash light meter is helpful if you have one. Set the camera's white balance. At the end of the session quickly review the images in a laptop computer. Make sure the images are in focus!

With older children or teens, a background light will add that professional touch. A hair light is nice if the model has dark hair but the use of additional lighting makes the image capture more difficult. Teen age girls are best photographed with mom, girlfriends or boyfriends at some distance.

Outdoor photography is easiest done with one umbrella fill. Gold lined umbrellas are really nice out of doors. Do not attempt quality portraiture outside with simple on camera flash unless the model is but a small part of the image. More depth of field is commonly employed when shooting outdoors. Be sure that the fill doesn't overexpose the picture. Here a grey card or flash light meter is valuable. Do not fill flash more than minus 1 f-stop. Try to use ISO 100 with a fairly fast shutter outside. Consult the camera instruction on how to use flash fill outdoors so that synchronization with the shutter is accomplished.

Good luck and happy shooting.

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