

WHAT TO WEAR *Families*



Ever After Portraits

But What Do
We Wear?





The session date is scheduled and you're excited about your upcoming portraits. But then the dreaded question arises: "What on earth are we going to wear?!"

Undoubtedly you know the basic portrait rules:

You can't go wrong with solid colors.

You don't want to have 40 photos of Aaron in his day-glo Lightning McQueen tee shirt.

That huge bow on Violet's head might draw a bit too much attention away from her sparkling hazel eyes.

But where do you go from there?

What traditional portrait wardrobe rules are meant to be bent, if not broken entirely?

And what about dressing the entire family?

Worry no more! That's where this guide enters the, ahem, picture.

So sit back, enjoy a little light reading, and get inspired! The result will be fresh, classic, yet distinctly modern portraits that tell the story of your family.

Families

Flowing white shirts and khakis on the beach. Navy polos and yet more khakis all around. We've all seen those photos - heck, most of us have been in those photos!

But did you know that coordinated, but not "uniform," looks for families create a much more pleasing photograph?! Moreover, it is not nearly as difficult as you think it is!

The cardinal rule of family dressing for portraits is simple:

- Choose items for the entire family as if you were creating one outfit.
- If all of your choices were somehow on one person, would the result be pleasing, colorwise?

A handy trick for those who are hesitant to break away from the monochrome madness is:

- Choose one patterned item (for example, a printed dress for your daughter)
- Then select the rest of the family's clothing from colors within that pattern.



Putting It All Together

So how do you put it all together? A good place to start is by defining the style sensibility you want your session to reflect.

Do you want to capture your typical style, or perhaps a more formal or casual version of that?

Look at the furniture around your home, or notice the magazine spreads to which you are drawn. Chances are that these preferences have everything to do with your clothing style and can point you in the right direction for your session wardrobe choices.

What follows are a few common styles. While by no means all-inclusive, they should get those wheels turning!

Finally, you'll find an extensive collection of web resources at the end of this guide. Happy shopping!



Formal Elegant Style

Choose clothing that is guaranteed to never go out of style. Solid colors only. Stay away from patterns, logos, and anything distracting.

Men - Dark Jackets (tuxedo or suit), white shirt, tie, and dark pants, dress shoes

Ladies - Jewel tones or Dark (black, navy, burgundy, red, dark green, etc.) dress or gown. White lace around collar is okay. Little or no pattern is preferred.

Long sleeve dress is preferred for women

Classic Jewelry such as diamonds, pearls, etc. are encouraged.

Young Girls - Dark or jewel toned solid dresses are preferred, but ivory, cream or off white are also acceptable if they are 4 or under. Girls usually are preferred to have short or no sleeves.

Young Boys - Same as men, or a solid dark sweater. If under 4, a white shirt with bow tie can be appropriate.



Timeless Tailored Style

Timeless and tailored, this style has the added benefit of making the wearer look thinner and thus taller. Your tendency to like black and navy plays into a monochromatic fashion style too, which is another way to look longer and leaner, but neutrals can work well as shown below.

I particularly love the retro-sweet styles of Olive Juice Kids and Pears and Bears; they are traditional, yet updated and fresh looks.

For the ultimate in luxurious old European (as opposed to funky European!) styles, try Flora and Henri and Papo d'Anjo. You won't be disappointed with their impeccable, classic choices.

For Mom and Dad, try Brooks Brothers (for both), Talbots (for both but more commonly for her), and Hickey Freeman (for him).



Modern Classic Style

Is your home a mixture of Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams and Pottery Barn? This refined but never stuffy, modern classic style is not quite traditional, not quite trendy, and “just right” for many.

Streamlined looks from Gap, Ann Taylor, Banana Republic, and Burberry are perfect for this look.

For those who want modern classic but with a smidge of romantic whimsy or British flair, try Anthropologie for her and Thomas Pink for him.

You'll find loads of smart classics for the little ones at Janie and Jack (Gymboree's more refined big brother), J. Crew's Crewcuts, Land's End, and Lilly Pulitzer.



Casual Relaxed Style

When you choose a relaxed, casual outfit, a sense of style is not dismissed. Quite possibly it is even more catered to, as with comfortable clothing, the proportions must be well-balanced, the tailoring just as effortless and the colors classic and somewhat neutral.

Whether it's your favorite slacks from Talbots or that new shirt you've been eyeing at Ann Taylor, both are perfect for this look.

For the casual outfit, we suggest lighter colors for your top. And again...solid colors preferred.

Dark slacks or khakis are fine for the bottoms. Shorts do not photograph well. Stay away from patterns, logos, and anything distracting. Feel free to go barefoot for your casual outfit.



Trendy Romantic Style

Are you more Restoration Hardware and celebrate family being the heart of your home? Are you a fan of all things romantic and fanciful? If your wardrobe essentials consist of plenty of dresses and skirts with frills, florals or embroidery this style is for you.

If so, you'll undoubtedly count on Valentino and Pucci to send dreamy dresses and skirts down the runway each season, but if you don't want to wait, find these romantic staples at Anthropologie, Ruche, Francesca's and LoveShackFancy.

For the little doll in your life, why not use this as an opportunity for a new Dollcake dress?

Find something fashionable for dad at Topman or Ted Baker.



Coordinating Your Clothing

You may be wondering, "But how do I coordinate our clothing?!"

Great question! Overall, darker clothing colors photograph better because the attention is drawn to the lightest thing in your portrait - YOU! But you don't have to forego ALL color. In the example to the right, you'll see that Mom and Dad are dressed in black, BUT to bring in some color, Dad is wearing a blue tie and their daughter is wearing a blue dress in a similar shade of blue.

This is an excellent and easy way of coordinating clothing for your family portrait!



Do you prefer more of a blend of colors?



In the example to the left, shades of brown, cream and peach are used. The most important thing to remember is: No one should have on the same article of clothing in the same color! Dad and son are in shades of brown; the son's peachy bowtie complements the daughter's dress - in a similar way, Mom's cream dress coordinates well with Dad's shirt.

The result? A pleasing blend of colors, with no one person grabbing all of the attention!

DO'S...

Hairstyles - Have hair cut a week or more before your session. Allow two weeks for a fresh perm to relax. Don't try a totally new hairstyle, as several months are generally needed to get accustomed to a new look.

Shaving - Shave just before the session as a five o'clock shadow cannot be removed from the finished portrait.

Clothing Fit and Preparation - Wear only well-fitting, freshly pressed clothing in good repair.

Glasses - The key to a good portrait is capturing the eyes, and eyeglasses can distort or darken them and cause unwanted reflections. Wear contact lenses or eliminate the reflections and the distorting refractions normally seen in glasses by having your optician remove your lens. (Give them several days' notice.)

What about a Suntan? - Too much sun darkens your skin unnaturally, dries out your hair, makes skin appear shiny and greasy and shows bags under your eyes. Strap marks will show as white marks on draped poses or bare shoulder poses. Keep your tan even. Don't overdo the sun for a portrait - sunburn is a real problem!

Makeup

We always suggest that our clients get their makeup formally done. Take all the worry out of how you look by having your makeup and hair stylist come to you at your home.

Since we've been doing weddings, we've worked with Barbara of Bridal Artistry. She or any one of her staff will do an awesome job, and they are available to travel wherever you like throughout the DC area. Reach out to her at 703-380-9961.

Doing Your Own Makeup

If you do choose to do your own makeup, remember: Bright studio lights tend to minimize makeup, so it's a good idea to wear some makeup, even if you don't normally wear it. The most common problem is shine, so use and bring powder. Apply your makeup lightly, but normally, paying special attention to your eyes as they will be the most important part of your portrait! Avoid brilliant or garish colors on your eyes, lips and cheeks. Blend very carefully and thoroughly. If you use foundation, use it on your entire face and neck down to the neckline of your blouse.

For those with blemishes, here's a quick hint that will greatly enhance your portraits: Just before your session, stand two feet in front of the mirror. Dab a small amount of cover-up makeup on any noticeable blemishes. That's it - if they're gone in the mirror, they'll be gone in your portraits! (Severe acne will require additional retouching at an additional charge.)

...AND DON'TS

White - DON'T put everyone in white! The 1980s called - they want their portrait style back!

Matchy-matchy - Coordinate your outfits without your group all wearing the exact same thing.

Avoid having just one person wear a completely different color, especially when that color is very bright or in stark contrast to the rest of the family. This draws the attention just to that person instead of unifying the group.

Loose, baggy clothing - Remember, these portraits will be a reminder to your loved ones of what you look like when they can't be with you! Fitted clothing looks much more polished and flattering than loose clothing, which can just make you appear boxy. Check the fit of jackets, sweaters or collared shirts, and be sure that the collar won't obscure your face when you sit down and that the shoulders won't bunch up.

Do not let anyone wear gym shoes, running shoes or tennis shoes - or white socks! Unless they are vintage Chucks or something equally cool, we recommend dress shoes.

Full, long skirts are easier to pose than short or tight skirts.

Avoid sleeveless or spaghetti straps unless your arms are tanned and very thin.

Never Wear

- Heavy patterns
- Stripes
- One-single-color outfits
- Tank tops/Tube tops
- Bermuda shorts
- Do not wear a shirt that is darker than your slacks or skirt.
- Do not wear short sleeves, short pants or short skirts that allow the knees to show when seated.
- Avoid busy patterns.
- Avoid anything camouflage.

Where to Shop

The short list for where to shop for Children's Clothing . . .

best Traditional . . . olivejuicekids.com
best Modern Classic . . . janieandjack.com
best Modern Trendy . . . bodenusa.com
best Euro Style . . . chasing-fireflies.com

Traditional (*including a modern or retro twist*)
olivejuicekids.com
nordstrom.com
florahenri.com
strasburgchildren.com
rachelriley.com
orientexpressed.com

Modern Classic
janieandjack.com
macys.com
hannaandersson.com
oldnavy.com
gymboree.com
jcrew.com/kids

Modern Trendy
bodenusa.com
izzyandash.com
teacollection.com

Euro Style
chasing-fireflies.com
oilily.com
catimini.com
matildajaneclothing.com



Janie and Jack



Nordstrom

Where to Shop

Macy's



Meli Meli at
Chasing Fireflies



Macy's



Olive Juice Kids



Where to Shop

Shoes and Accessories for Children . . .

Shoes (sources for Primigi, Umi and more!)

zappos.com

vincentshoestore.us

dsw.com

striderite.com

heatherstreasurebox.com

pediped.com

livieandluca.com

robee.com

Hats, Tights, Cute Tees, and other

Fanciful Accessories

littlemissmatched.com

trumpette.com

Bear Feet Shoes at
Best Foot Forward



Clothing for Teens, Moms and Dads . . .

nordstrom.com

macys.com

forever21.com

garnethill.com

pinkice.com

hickeyfreeman.com

tutu from Prissy Poofs



Nordstrom





INSPIRATION

Color Palettes

Brights



Charcoals/Greys



Color Splash



Earth Tones



Jewel Tones



Metallics



Neutrals



Pastels



Shades of One Color

(Our personal favorite)



Sky





Ever After Portraits
571.434.0009

