



Introduce your kids to photography

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It's the summer holidays – so what better time to get the kids interested in taking their own pictures? Try our advice to help them get snapping in style...

The basics

- Make sure they're holding the camera level and steady (elbows tucked in, holding it in both hands, leaning against something if they can).
- Remind them to keep things simple by filling the frame with their subject as much as possible, to reduce distracting elements.
- Get them used to checking what's in the frame before they press the shutter, so they can avoid the usual beginner error of trees growing out of people's heads.
- Encourage them to shoot with the camera on its side as well as in landscape mode, for vertical shots that are great for portraits, trees and buildings (and giraffes).

Now get them experimenting with...

Taking lots of pictures

Back in the day when we had to buy film and processing was expensive, the tendency was to hold back on shooting. These digital days, that's no longer an issue, and it's great news for

learners of all ages, as they can shoot away and see their results immediately, so their learning curve can be a lot quicker. So foster your children's natural inclination to play and take lots of pictures, and review their images with enthusiasm, concentrating on what they've done well rather than on what hasn't worked.

Viewpoints

Get them to shoot from up high and low down on the ground (kids are often perfectly happy rolling around in mud where an adult would fear to tread!). The younger they are, generally the lower their own eye-level shots are going to be anyway, so you might find they naturally have a different take on a scene than an adult. Encourage them to move around their subject, and get closer or further away by walking as well as varying the focal length.

The rule of thirds

While they'll probably enjoy shooting at wild angles – which can be fun with candid shots and pets – introducing them to the 'rule' of thirds will really give their images a boost. And of course, once they're familiar with it, they'll equally enjoy breaking it! Even if they don't quite get it, simply teaching them to position their subject off-centre is a great start – and that means showing them how to use focus lock to ensure their off-centre subject is sharp. It's such a simple technique that works with all types of camera, but it will make a world of difference to their imaging.

Scene modes

Show them how and when to select their camera's different scene modes, such as portrait, sports and night-time, and explain what the camera is doing when it uses these settings – changing the aperture, the shutter speed, the ISO and so on. This will help them start to understand how cameras work, and set them up well for exploring more advanced settings like aperture priority and manual.

Exposure settings

If your child is using a DSLR (or a compact with advanced exposure modes), start them off in 'auto' and with scene modes so they don't have to worry about settings. When they're getting

to grips with composition, introduce them to aperture priority or shutter priority, and you can use these to show them how aperture, shutter speed and ISO are all interlinked, and how changing any of these affects the final photograph.

Finally, while the temptation might be to micromanage their early efforts, the most important thing you can do is to let them play with their camera. Don't stifle their natural curiosity and inventiveness – you never know, their unfettered imaginations might teach you a thing or two!



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