



Mamarazzi
Every Mom's Guide
to Photographing Kids

Stacy Wasmuth



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About the Author



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Children's photographer Stacy Wasmuth has a simple goal: to beautifully portray life as art. With a flair for capturing personality and an eye for composition, she strives to make each portrait collection as unique as the child she is photographing. Stacy aims to capture genuine expressions—from a shy smile or a soulful stare to the scowl of a temper tantrum.

Stacy created Blue Candy Photography in early 2006, and she has quickly become one of the most sought-after children's photographers. She was named Indianapolis' best photographer by *Indianapolis Monthly* in 2008. In 2010, she was chosen to be part of the prestigious Fresh M.I.L.K. project, which celebrates Moments of Intimacy, Laughter and Kinship. That same year she shot the cover for *Mothering Magazine*.

Stacy currently resides in Indianapolis with her husband and three young boys, whom she freely admits are among her most challenging photography subjects. And although Stacy's work has been published nationally and

internationally, her most prized portraits are the ones displayed on her bedside table.

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Roll Credits

This book is the result of hard work and encouragement from friends, family and colleagues.

They cannot go unrecognized for their contributions.

The Producers:

Courtney, thank you for entrusting this special project to me.

It took your talent to turn a brilliant idea to reality.

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share your meaningful mamarazzo insight took this book to
a new level. The thoughtful notes

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excitement for this book.

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print!

The Talent:

Clients of Blue Candy Photography, thank you for trusting
me to capture your

families' memories. No matter how many photo sessions I
have under my belt,

documenting each family's history is a true privilege and
honor.

Behind-the-Scenes Stars:

Randy, I'm so blessed to call you my husband and best friend.

I love that you never allow us to settle for anything less than living life to the fullest.

Kaleb, Micah and Elijah, you are my life's dearest treasures. Thank you for inspiring me daily.

Mom, you were the first (and best) mamarazzo in my life. Thank you for encouraging me to chase a childhood dream.

Dad, thank you for encouraging (and nitpicking!) my every effort to put pen to paper...

from my childhood notebook to the real deal.

Was, thank you for being like my second mom.

Grandpa Irwin, thank you for passing down the photography gene.

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Lynn, your author-to-author encouragement meant the world to

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Stasia, thank you for your talented translation of legal-ese.

If it weren't for your kind help, I might still be trying to make sense of the contract.

Lucy, woof-woof-howl. Translation: You stayed faithfully by my side as I wrote every word of this book.

Thank you for turning me into a dog person.

The Fans:

To each and every one of you who stepped in to cheer me on, thank you!

The Director:

Thank you to the true author and perfecter of life. You deserve the leading role more often.



*For the ones I love
more than
all the water in the ocean,
all the flowers in the spring,
all the sand at the beach,
and all the leaves in the fall.*

Without you, this book would have never been written.

*With love,
All the stars in the sky*



*And for the world's orphans.
A portion of this book's proceeds will go to you.*



f/2.2, 1/640, iso 200
©Stacy Wasmuth





f/2.8, 1/160, iso 200
©Jaime Lackey, www.jaimelackeyphotography.com

Introduction

Mamarazzi [*mah-muh-raht-tsee*] (noun, plural):

Mothers who doggedly pursue opportunities to take, share and display photographs of their children. No matter how much said children resist or how intensely they roll their little eyes, a mamarazzo knows it is her personal mission to document the moments of their life journey—major, minor and ... really, everything in between, too.

This is a book about how to refine your technique as a mamarazzo and—calmly, coolly—capture winning shots of your child(ren). The tips and tricks in this book will ensure that you never find yourself—in the first week of December, for example—looking through your mail and finding envelope after envelope stuffed with gorgeous photos of friends and family, adorned with festive colors and sporting season's greetings ... while the pit in your stomach churns at the thought of the requisite holiday photo that you don't have.





Great holiday photos
like this one may inspire (or aggravate!) you.

f/5.6, 1/250, iso 800

©Lisa Roberts,
www.lisaluckyphoto.com

Now up against everything from studio smiles to families on the beach in matching white shirts and khaki pants, you freeze in your tracks. You have yet to snap your own family's holiday photo, and time is running out. The thought sends a shiver down your spine as you consider attempting the impossible.

Sure, you're the classic mom with a camera always at the ready. No birthday party, lost tooth or first day of school goes undocumented in your world. But this is different. The quest for the perfect holiday photo can leave even the best shutter-snapping mom shaking in her Uggs.

But you put on your game face and get to work. You have just enough time before your son's nap and daughter's play date for a show-stopping photo shoot. With a sudden burst of energy (or maybe the jolt from your cappuccino's

caffeine), you raid the kids' closets. Tossing the Dora dress and Sponge Bob shirt aside, you decide that matching snowflake sweaters and pressed pants will surely spread some cheer. Faces are wiped; hair is brushed. You grab a poinsettia for the perfect holiday prop, plop the kids down in the warm noonday sun, throw the camera into little-green-box mode, yank off the lens cap and....

Say cheese, guys!!

You keep the shutter snapping and let your fancy new camera work its magic.

A few sibling spats and a temper tantrum or two might scare off the normal mom, but you're no rookie. Plus, you can beg, plead and bribe like no other.



If this is the typical result when you photograph your cherubs, never fear. Keep reading to find out how to create the images you envision!

f/4, 1/200, iso 100

©Kristine Gorczyk,

www.krysiaphotography.com

Luckily, your subjects relent just short of being promised a pony, and you call it a wrap. With a short victory lap to the

couch, you review your prized photos on the LCD, certain there is a winner in the bunch.

So you're shocked to see that the forced smiles and squinted eyes staring back at you in no way resemble your cherubic children. And you realize that brown grass with a wilted poinsettia wasn't exactly the festive locale you'd envisioned. Your holiday spirit is now squelched. And you wonder where you went wrong...



The birth of a new baby is a great time to learn photo basics.

©Amy Smith, www.amysmithphoto.com



Creatively capture the wonder
of childhood with your camera.

f/2.8, 1/400, iso 1250

©Stacy Wasmuth



Make memories of your child's milestones, like this first crawl toward Dad.

f/2.8, 1/250, iso 800

©Stacy Wasmuth



Real-life moments, like this toddler finding her reflection, deserve a spot in your photographs.

f/3.2, 1/320, iso 1600

©Stacy Wasmuth

Can you relate? If so, you can be sure that you're a camera-carrying member of the mamarazzi. Similar to the paparazzi, known for tormenting Hollywood stars, you may belong to a select group of moms (or dads!) who compulsively stalk, pester and nag their children in pursuit of the perfect photo. And who can blame you? After all, few things tug harder at a parent's heartstrings than a brilliant photograph of their beloved child(ren) captured in a forever memory.

Your story might have a slight twist. Maybe the upcoming birth of your first child has inspired you to learn photography basics. Or you have the itch to use your fancy new camera to its full potential, but don't know how to work all of the bells and whistles. Maybe you're frustrated that no matter how much you beg and plead, your children hate having their photos taken and resist your efforts at every turn. Or perhaps your current snapshots show what your child looks like, but the images lack the critical ingredient—to capture who they truly are.



Capturing sibling bonds couldn't be more special.

f/4.5, 1/200, iso 800

©Stacy Wasmuth



Learn how to shoot stunning close ups of your child.

f/2.8, 1/250, iso 400

©Stacy Wasmuth

You're in luck. There is hope. And you'll find it here.

With a few lighting lessons, a primer on photography basics, a bit of patient practice, and some professional tips and tricks, you'll be photographing memories that you'll be proud to have captured on film ... er, pixels ... in no time at all!



The best part about knowing your way around a camera is taking photos that truly represent your children.

f/2.8, 1/200, iso 160

©Jaime Lackey

www.jaimelackeyphotography.com



f/2.8, 1/250, iso 400

©Stacy Wasmuth

Take One: Roll Out the Red Carpet!





Connect with your child first and the expressions you love will follow.

f/2.8, 1/400, iso 400

©Stacy Wasmuth

Get Ready Get Set

“I truly believe that what I do is not about pictures on paper. It’s about making a connection. The portrait is a side effect.”

This poignant statement by modern-day family photographer Cheryl Jacobs can (and should!) be applied to all photographer-subject relations. But the connection between a parent photographer and child subject can be both powerful and delicate beyond words.



The Star

On the surface, it seems that taking photos of your kids should be a snap. After all, parents have everyday access to their kids and can capture moments as they arise. And parents are in the know regarding their child's interests, expressions and moods. Plus, kids are more comfortable with their parents than with anyone else.

But this familiarity is a double-edged sword. Just as you have the inside scoop on your children, they have the inside track on you! And more often than not, the snap of your shutter is their cue to push your buttons.

From the enthusiast photographer to the pro, shooting pictures of one's own children can leave any of us literally wanting to shoot something! And although clients tell me that I have the patience of a saint with their kids; trust me ... I've made a million mistakes with my own and lost my patience more times than I would ever actually admit. Thankfully, I've also learned some great tips along the way.



There is no question that kids know the (not so) fine art of how to push mom's buttons during a photo shoot.

f/2.5, 1/200, iso 400

©Rebecca Mudrick,
www.darling-art.com



Fun is the key ingredient to a successful shoot.

f/2.8, 1/500, iso 800

©Stacy Wasmuth

Be Fun!

A common mistake of the mamarazzi is to get the *shot* but miss out on the *experience*. When this happens, the onslaught of kid groans and grimaces should come as no surprise; your little subject has been conditioned to think that camera time is akin to torture. Well, luckily, the damage is not permanent.

By definition, *paparazzi* are relentless in getting the shot. But mamarazzi can dare to be different. Start by trying the following experiment: Approach your next photo op with your child by aiming to create a fun memory instead of getting a great shot. Easier said than done, it's true; but this will help convince your tot that it can be fun for them when your camera comes out of the bag.



Honest conversation brings forth childhood wonder.

f/2.8, 1/200, iso 1000

©Stacy Wasmuth

Be Honest.

While I encourage parents to use fun questions or games to evoke photogenic expressions, I'm not a fan of trickery. For instance, telling your toddler that "Elmo is hiding in the camera" might lead to a bewildered expression and a super snapshot. But what happens when he realizes that mom was not truthful?

Instead, use your child's imagination to draw out the same emotion. "Do you think that Elmo could fit inside my camera?" is a more honest question that will likely receive the same response and will spare you the song of *Liar, liar pants on fire*.

Be Kind.

Kids of all ages love to thumb through the family photo albums. How do you want them to feel when they re-live memories of the day that the shutter snapped? Chastised or cherished? Tormented or treasured?

Photographs are taken in a fraction of a second, but feelings from the captured moments last a lot longer. Handle your tiny celebrity with care, and remember that a little star treatment will go a long way.

This is surely one of photography's most difficult lessons, but it's one that guarantees great rewards.



Know when your star has had enough and be willing close the curtains on your show.

f/5.0, 1/200, iso 400

©Stacy Wasmuth

The Lights!

It's been said that photography is the language of light. And since light is so important, it's easy to assume that the best shots will be taken in environments with the most light. That's a common mistake, and couldn't be further from the truth. More light does not necessarily make for a better-quality photo. Instead, find locations with soft, even and indirect light.

My best tip for getting more natural photos is to shoot in a location that offers the light made by nature herself. Good outdoor locations for ideal light are the shady spots under a porch awning or next to a tall building. For indoor shots, north-facing windows make a lovely light source, since they receive indirect sunlight at almost any time of day.