

10 Photo Tips for Kids from School Life Troy photographer Ed Morykwas

Tip #1: Take lots of pictures.

Take your camera wherever you go. When you see something interesting, take a picture of it. Do a photo shoot with your family and friends. The beauty of digital is that you can always keep the best and delete the rest.

Tip #2: Look at your pictures.

Spend a few minutes studying the photos you took recently. In the good ones, try to figure out what you like and how to repeat it. In the bad ones, try to figure out what went wrong and how to avoid it. Be your own art critic.

Tip #3: Look at other people's pictures.

There are lots of books, magazines, and websites dedicated to photography. You probably know people in your life who take good pictures. Study everything and ask yourself, "What can I learn from this example?"

Tip #4: Work on your batting average.

It's like learning to hit a baseball. At first, you swing wildly at everything, hoping to get a hit. Eventually you develop an "eye" and your batting average will improve. That's the difference between an amateur and a professional: a high batting average.

Tip #5: Repeat this sentence.

"There is always a better way." Can you use another angle? Can you change the lighting? Can you zoom in or pull back for a different view? No matter what you're photographing, use your creativity and see what else you can do.

Tip #6: Photograph people at least twice.

Whether you're photographing one person or a group of people, take a backup shot in case somebody blinks. This has saved me more times than you'd believe! As hockey star Wayne Gretzky said, "You miss 100% of the shots you don't take."

Tip #7: Fast motion needs fast shutter speeds.

Experiment with "S" mode. A slow shutter speed (like 1/50 of a second) is for pictures of things that aren't moving. A fast shutter speed (like 1/200 of a second) is for action shots. Pictures that look out of focus might actually be suffering from motion blur.

Tip #8: See the light.

Great lighting make great pictures. Train your eye to see light, shadow, patterns, textures, colors, and shapes. Usually you'll want the light behind you so it's shining on your subject, but sometimes you can also get great effects by shooting into the light.

Tip #9: Be sensitive to feelings.

People often want to stand side by side, smiling stiffly at the camera, because they know they'll look good in that familiar pose. Your goal is to help them relax and let their true personalities shine through. The secret is to take time with them.

Tip #10: Focus on faces, even in a crowd.

Whenever I take pictures of a large event, I always try to get closeups of individual faces. I love seeing the intensity of someone playing an instrument, making a speech, competing in a sport, or even reading a book. Faces are fascinating!