

# What to Wear for Your Family Portrait

## Style, Clothing, Color, Tone...

What do you want your family portrait to say about you and your family? When thinking about the style of portrait you would like, consider the personalities of your family members, what you enjoy doing together and where you are going to display it in your home. If you are a casual family, a very formal traditional portrait may not be your style. Remember, you want this to be a memory of your family as it is today.

When creating a portrait you want the viewer's attention drawn to your family's faces and their expressions. To do this effectively you want to contrast the skin tone with the other colors and tones in the image. When a medium to dark background is preferred, most people photograph best in medium to dark toned clothing, whatever their skin tone.

Clothing for your family should be simple and in the same tonal ranges. When subjects' clothing is a mixture of light and dark tones it decreases the visual harmony - the light tone will dominate. It may also make the person dressed in the lighter tone appear heavier.

For family portraits it is very important to coordinate clothing. Tonal harmony is the most important goal. In a portrait, no one person should stand out visually. Proper clothing selection can make the difference between a portrait, that appears to be a group of unrelated people and one in which every member of the family appears to belong together.

To help you decide what clothing color to wear, first decide where you will hang your portrait. Look at the accent colors in the room. Do you like the way you look in one of those colors? If so consider wearing clothing in that color. The harmony between the colors of the portrait and the room will look pleasing and enhance the decor of your home.

## Preparing For Your Portrait

Turtle necks or v-necks are flattering provided that neither is exaggerated in style. Avoid very wide or particularly deep v-neck garments or bulky cowl neck sweaters that completely hide the neck.

For close-up portraits, long sleeves are essential, as bare arms call attention to the selves and will overpower the face. Remember, no matter how slim your arms are they may appear heavier in your portrait.

Women being photographed in full length should wear longer skirts, pants, or dark nylons in order to keep the eye from being directed toward the legs and away from the face.

Feet may show in the portrait, so be sure to wear socks and shoes that compliment the outfit you are wearing?

Men should be clean-shaven or facial hair should be carefully groomed.

Men should have their hair cut about one week before the portrait session. Women should be photographed whenever they are happiest with their hair in relation to the time it is styled or cut.