

It's great to take a candid shot of someone; we've all had those moments where we suddenly see a child looking really cute, we reach for the camera and grab the shot. Occasionally we get a great picture, but how often is the result not quite as good as you thought it would be? The secret to getting really good pictures of people is to actually control the situation more.

If you can control the background and the light, then let the child play in your "set", you have a much better chance of taking a great picture. If you start with the child, without thinking about their surroundings – you may get distracted and forget about the dustbin in the background or the fact that the sun has just come out and is creating shadows all over his face – so make sure you've sorted these things out first. Then you can follow the child around within that area knowing that the chances are whatever you shoot is going to look good.

» It's important to work out WHERE you're going to TAKE the photos and WHERE the best LIGHT is to create the best location for a portrait photo



Most people look for flowers and trees – or stand someone in front of a sharply in-focus building. But these are not always the best backgrounds for people, as foliage and landmarks can detract from the person's face. I prefer out of focus backgrounds which complement people, using **COLOUR** and **TEXTURE** and emphasising the person.



The background in this shot is a very scruffy piece of wet hardboard! When out of focus, it looks great with the colour of Lucas' hair.

This picture is a lovely picture of Jessica by a tree, but you can get a very different picture of her by using an old wagon container! The texture and colour of the metal creates a more contemporary feel to the picture, and becomes much more a picture of 'Jessica', rather than a picture of "Jessica by a tree". Each of these pictures is appealing, but the tree shot is more traditional, whereas the others create a more contemporary feel.

The blue container naturally works well in colour, but looks equally good in black & white.

» Look for shapes, colour and textures that work well out of focus



Sarah is crouching on a concrete floor outside the glass doors of a shoe shop!