



Perspective



Details



Prediction

## Children's Photography Tips



By Roxanne Kotze

My passion for photography began very early. I received my first camera at age 14, around the same time that I became involved with childcare. The two passions led me to buy a second camera at age 18, and my business took off.

I did a photography course with College SA, but most of my experience has come from experimentation. I have also shadowed renowned professional photographer Dirk Visser on several wedding and family shoots.

I am the photographer here at Mindstretch, and I am honoured to be so!

I hope these ten tips on photographing children will help you to capture life's precious, fleeting moments:

**1. Perspective:** When photographing children, it is important to get to their level. Avoid always taking shots from above. Try crouching or kneeling to reach their eye level.

**2. Details:** Include little details in your photos, such as hands, feet and hair. Photos do not have to be only about the child's smiling face.

**3. Prediction:** Any parent will know the importance of thinking ahead. This is a vital tool in getting a good shot. Watch where a child is headed, and try to anticipate what they might pick up and play with.



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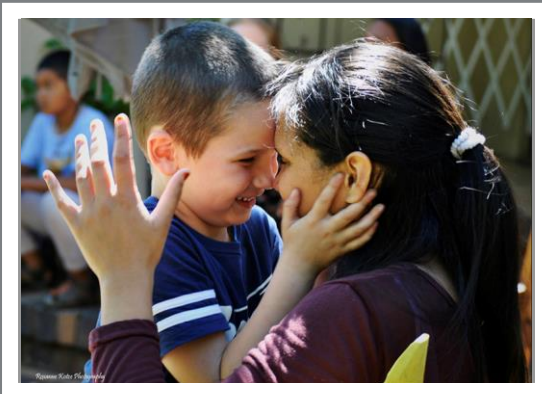
Welcome to Issue 14 of our Newsletter, and thank you to Roxanne Kotze for her photography article and for use of her wonderful images.

We have had another good term at Mindstretch Preschool, including sponsoring the next round of community lectures, this time focused on Occupational Therapy concerns. Thanks to all who attended and helped the event to succeed, and please look out for articles by Mindstretch Consultant OTs Faatima Ebrahim and Zoë Moosman in our upcoming newsletters.

With thanks, Jennifer  
 Founder and Principal



Candid



Play



Environment



Light

**4. Candid:** Get shots when the child is not aware of the camera. You will lose the cheesy grin and get a real, honest portrait. Keep your camera nearby.

**5. Play:** Posed photos can be great, but they can end up with forced smiles and uncomfortable body language. Nobody wants that photo on their fridge. Relax and play with your child and shoot as you go. Do not be afraid to be silly!

**6. Environment:** Use the space around you to make a beautiful photo. Find an interesting patch of light, a quiet corner, a busy flurry of activity, and use it.

**7. Light:** Avoid making any subject squint into the sun. Shoot to the side or have soft back lighting. The best times to do an outdoor shoot are early morning or late afternoon when the light is soft.

**8. Patience:** If the child does not want to be photographed, do not force them. Try again later. This will avoid them growing to dislike the camera.

**9. Equipment:** If the photographs are important to you, and if you can afford it, invest in a good camera. Quality equipment is key for a truly excellent image. Cellphones cameras have advanced, but still cannot capture the essence of a great photo. Learn the settings to get the most use out of a camera.

**10. Experiment:** Lastly, let your creativity flow. Do not get stuck in one style or think there is only one way to take photos. Break the rules: tell *your* story through your lens the way in which you wish.

## About Roxanne

Roxanne Kotze specializes in child photography. She is also expert in wedding, family and newborn shoots and events.

Find Roxanne on Facebook @RKotzePhotography. Or, contact her at saycheese333@gmail.com.

## Why We Enrol From Age Three

**Neuroplasticity** and **Early Intervention** are buzz words in education today, and for good reason. The brain is most flexible (neuroplastic) early on. In the first few years of life more than a million new neural connections form every second. This makes sense: babies, toddlers and preschoolers have much to learn about the world! They need to get used to different environments and interactions, and they must learn how to communicate.

Sensory pathways like those for basic vision and hearing advance first. Then come early language skills, and then higher cognitive functions.

**'Cognitive functions' involve all aspects of perception, thinking, reasoning and remembering.**

As early as the first year, the brain becomes used to the sounds of the language the baby is hearing. At the same time, the baby's brain begins to lose its ability to recognise other sounds found in other languages. We can learn language and other complicated skills in later life, but it is much harder.

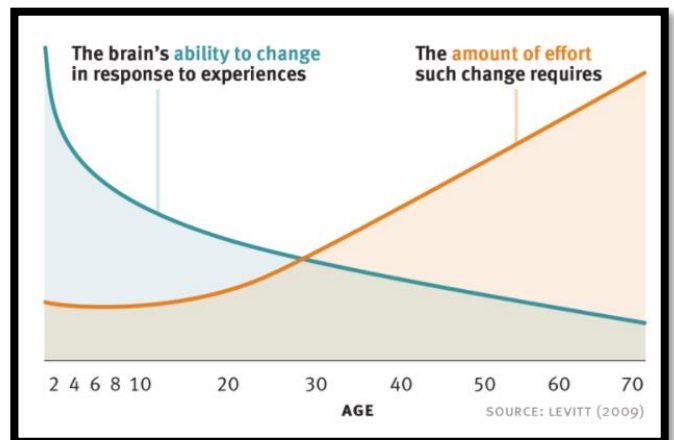
The maturing brain becomes less plastic because it must specialize, taking on more complex functions and refining key abilities; for example, to become skilled in a chosen career or past-time. There is not room for both high flexibility and deep specialization. The complex brain circuits of later life are built on the simpler ones put down in the early years.

**Brains are built over time, from the bottom up.**

Of course, it is not only about cognitive function. The emotional health, social skills and language abilities that emerge in the early years are very important for later success, in school, at work and in life.

This is why Mindstretch Preschool encourages early enrolment, from as early as three years of age. It is also why we take a balanced approach to emotional, social, language and cognitive development.

**Getting things right early on is easier than fixing them later.**



The Center of the Developing Child,  
Harvard University (<https://developingchild.harvard.edu>)





## Our Firefighters

At Mindstretch we love our firefighters, and we're grateful to them for visiting us a few times now. Their most recent visit in May was highly anticipated, by our children and our staff alike. We got the opportunity to both socialise and learn.

The firemen are always incredibly patient and loving with our learners. The children get to explore their shiny red fire engine up close, or from a distance, whatever the child prefers. Through a brief talk, the firefighters teach us about the dangers of fire. We also learn the importance of community service, of helping someone.

There is a lot of giggling when the firefighters demonstrate their clothing and dress up a willing child in the gear. The fire-resistant clothing is surprisingly heavy. Best of all is trying on the showy helmet.

In previous non-drought years, the children loved the display of the fire hoses spraying water in wonderful high arcs. They get hands on, learning how to hold the hoses, getting the chance to spray them, enjoying the puddles left behind. Many of our children – even some who are usually shy – find their inhibitions overcome as they join in the performance.

We purposefully ask the fire brigade to repeat their visits, not only because they are fun and educational, but also because we have observed how our more cautious children are increasingly willing to participate as they learn to trust the firefighters.

**Mindstretch thanks our Cape Town Firefighters for everything they do!**



## We Welcome Your Feedback

- Email [jen@mindstretch.co.za](mailto:jen@mindstretch.co.za) with comments or suggestions, and please follow us on Facebook ([@mindstretch.co.za](https://www.facebook.com/mindstretch.co.za))
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