

# What to Wear Guide



Create Cohesive, Comfortable,  
Confident Family Portraits



LISA MACO PHOTOGRAPHY

# Choosing Clothes Made Simple

Choosing what to wear for your family portrait can feel tricky, but it's one of the most important steps in creating photos you'll treasure forever. The right wardrobe brings everyone together visually, highlights your family's unique personality, and ensures your images look timeless. It is vital to everyone feeling confident and ready for their family session.

Whether you're aiming for timeless and elegant or vibrant and playful, this guide will help you make informed choices. We'll walk you some color combinations, demonstrating how each palette can enhance your family's features and create a visually stunning composition. It will also give you insights into how certain fabrics, patterns, and textures can add depth and visual interest to your portraits. You'll discover how you can use accessories to elevate your outfits and bring out your individual style.

This guide is designed to spark your creativity and make the process both practical and fun — helping you coordinate your family's clothing in a way that feels effortless, cohesive, and beautiful.

# The Strategy

## Start with the Hard-to-Please Family Member

Most families have someone who's more particular about what they wear. Begin with that person's outfit choice and build the rest of the family's wardrobe around it. This ensures that everyone feels comfortable, confident, and happy, while still achieving a coordinated look.

## Consider Your Color Palette

Select colors that complement one another without being too matchy-matchy. Neutral tones, soft pastels, or muted jewel tones often photograph beautifully. Think about your family's style and the mood you want your portraits to convey. Avoid overly bright colors, large logos, or distracting patterns that might draw attention away from your family.

## Consider Your Home Décor

If you plan to display portraits as wall art, think about the colors and style of your home. Your family's clothing should complement the space where your photos will live — creating a seamless, elegant look that enhances your home décor.

# The Strategy

## Accessories and Layers

Accessories like scarves, belts, or simple jewelry can add depth and personality to portraits. Light layers — jackets, cardigans, or vests — allow for variation between shots. Avoid anything too trendy that might look dated in a few years.

## Footwear Matters

Shoes are often an afterthought but can impact the overall look. Keep it simple, clean, and coordinated. Neutral tones usually work best, but feel free to add subtle pops of color if it complements the overall palette. Barefoot is sweet for young children.

## Lay Everything Out Together

When everyone has chosen clothing, lay it all out on a bed or table and take a step back. Look at the wardrobe as a whole. Does it feel cohesive? Does anything stand out in a way that's distracting? If so, consider swapping pieces until everything flows together visually.

## Comfort Equals Confidence

Choose clothing that feels comfortable and allows your family to move freely. If someone feels restricted or fussy in their outfit, it can show in the photos. Prioritize both style and comfort — confident, relaxed expressions make all the difference.

# Keeping it Neutral



Both with light hair and complexions, Mom and daughter chose to wear shades of neutral. Mom is in all solid colors with her reptile skin shoes adding pattern and texture interest. Daughter's dress has a small pattern that adds a bit of accent color without overpowering the scene. They are both comfortable and happy with their choices.

Main Colors



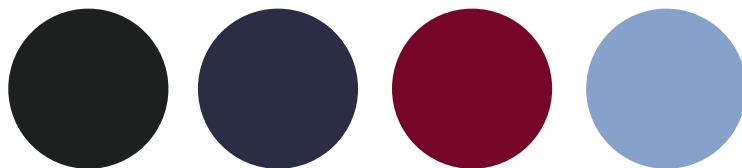
Accent Colors



# Leaning Toward Formal



A bit formal, the overall tone is dark with blacks and navies, including a leather jacket on mom and leather pants on the younger daughter. Dad, son, and older daughter added a light blue shirt as an accent. Mom stands out with burgundy blouse and a necklace. The dog is clearly part of the family with his black and white coat!



# Mixing Formal with Fun

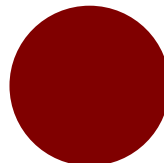


These sisters are in similar, though not the same, dresses in jewel tones. The green compliments the blond hair of one sister and the blue works well with the dark hair of the other. You could easily add ruby or garnet for another jewel tone. Each dress has lace as texture on the bodice and the bare feet add an element of humor, which make for happy girls.

Jewel tones



Possible addition



# Blending with Nature



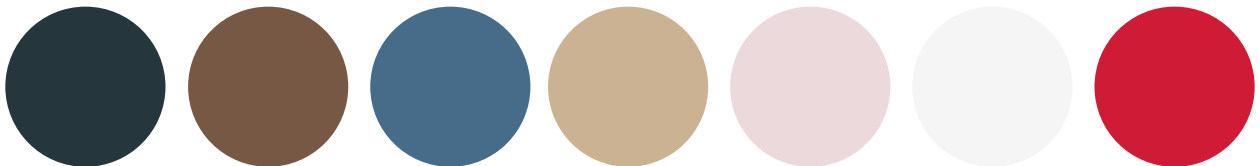
With an outdoor fall session, mom chose clothing to complement the natural scene. The blues of mom's pants, the children's sweaters, and dad's shirt provide the anchor. The boy's green pants and dad's rust/brown pants add some color interest, and mom's blouse and sweater add neutrals. We get some added texture from mom's sweater and small pattern from the girl's dress. Each person is individual and, as a group, cohesive.



# Focus on Relationships



Some years, you might want to highlight just your children. In this case, mom chose neutrals for the brothers and a pretty pink dress for the sister with the jeans jacket to help her stand out. She brought her hat and the boys added hats from my studio. And those red lips? Nobody knew where they came from! The combination created a fun and funny kids portrait.



# Emphasizing Pattern & Texture



You might not realize how important clothing is when shooting for a black and white result. The girl is in a white chiffon dress that flowed easily when the breeze of a hot summer night started blowing her hair. The brocade waistband adds an interesting pattern detail and the straw hat and the tree add touches of texture.

# Breaking All the Rules!



The most important rule in life is knowing when to break all the rules! Here we let the kids be their own quirky selves. One sister is wearing her absolute favorite item of all time (until the next one) - her Michael Kors boots - along with her favorite tennis skirt, a sequined t-shirt and her "diamond" necklace. The other sister is in a fancy dress and her soccer socks and cleats. Why? Because she said that's who she is. And why not? Would you want them any other way?

# *A Simple Reminder*

Planning your family's wardrobe doesn't have to be stressful. There is no perfect wardrobe. With thoughtful coordination, attention to color, and a few key strategies, you'll create portraits that are timeless, heartfelt, and true to your family. Take a moment to enjoy the process. After all, these are the moments and memories you'll cherish forever.

And remember — I'm here to help. If you'd like a second opinion, lay out your options and text me a photo. I'm happy to guide you so you feel completely confident walking into your session.

*Lisa Maw*



Lisa Maco Photography, LLC  
4400 Greenwich Pkwy NW  
Washington, DC 20007  
lisamaco.com  
lisa@lisamaco.com  
202.905.8180