

QUICK OVERVIEW

Assistant's Tools and Responsibilities:

- Know Little Icons History
- Use Little Icons Tone and Language
- Have the schedule and help keep the photographer on time
- know each child's name and let the photographer know
- Tricks and tips to help the photographer with poses and expressions:
 - Which direction to keep eyes/face in the light
 - Learn children's songs
 - Puppets
 - Use knick knacks from basket (harmonica, or any other fun things)
 - Have fun, be goofy
 - Notice dirty faces and jump in when shirts are bunchy, etc.
 - Know when to walk away/leave space for the photographer
- Know how to guide parents the Little Icons way
- Allow children to have their feelings, NEVER tell them not to cry or that they don't need to cry. Validate their feelings, it will go a long way. This can look like "Sometimes it's scary to try new things, it's ok if you need a mama hug. We're going to have some fun." Re-direct them when possible, give space when needed.
- Show parents how to support baby, and watch for hands and thumbs in the shot
- Give a thank you card and the end of session spiel including: gallery timeline, keep an eye out for the full collection discount, you can order prints from the gallery to be delivered to your home, etc.
- Dress according to Little Icons Dress code:
 - Presentable: casual, yet clean and professional
 - Plain black or white t-shirt (no logos unless Little Icons)
 - Jeans or Black pants
 - Clean shoes(ask photographer for link for more info)

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Photographer's Assistants

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PHOTOGRAPHER

If you've been chosen for this role- the photographer really trusts you! It is a vulnerable thing to invite someone into your art, and your creative space. Thank you for being here. This is a playful and creative role that requires emotional intelligence and adaptability. Communicate with the photographer about their expectations and goals, and how you would be most helpful in having the day run smoothly.

This will include interacting with the children and parents, keeping an eye on the time and the photographer in check, making sure the photographer knows the name of the next child, etc. Each photographer has their own style and needs. Once you've worked together a few times you will establish routines and rhythms, and your chemistry will become a wonderful part of the portrait creating process! Below you will find a guide to how we operate, and our values.

UNCONDITIONAL POSITIVE REGARD

We treat all children and their parents with unconditional positive regard. This means that we view them as individual human beings with their own free will. We assume they are doing the best they can, and our respect for them is not dependent on their performance or emotions. Our aim is that everyone who walks through an experience with us leaves feeling loved and respected. There are trying moments in these sessions, no doubt, but we keep the tone positive and kind, always. We are creative in our interactions in order to attain the desired outcome; beautiful portraits and an amazing experience.

MIRROR NEURONS:

Being present and modelling the energy you'd like the room to adapt can work wonders to influence the situation. On top of that, simply making faces at the kids- or even babies, will often have them copying you, creating great opportunities for the photographer. Pay attention to what the photographer is aiming for or if anything specific is needed to create a more dynamic gallery.

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GREET PEOPLE WHEN THEY ARRIVE

We always start in a calm friendly manner so that we don't overwhelm a shy or nervous child. It's great to know the children's names in advance of them arriving. Greet the parents and the children and assess how comfortable the children are feeling. Look to the photographer to take the lead. The kids are often nervous, if you get a sense that they are feeling shy give them some time to warm up by chatting with the parents only. It is good to establish a connection with the parents so that if they become a hindrance during the session you can have conversations with them to distract them or even gently ask them to let the photographer guide the session by building a rapport with their child.

*Remember that this is an experience for everyone, guiding things in a gentle and kind manner is of utmost importance.

EDUCATE PARENTS ON WHAT TO EXPECT AND HOW TO HELP

If there is time, while the photographer is finishing up with the previous clients, you can talk to the parents about how to approach/assist during the session in an age appropriate manner for their child. The photographer may be the one to communicate this when there isn't an overlap of sessions. You will find your rhythm together.

Babies need a parent next to them holding them low on the back and stomach. Make sure to let them know that their hands need to be low- watch for fingers too high on the babies chest, or in their armpits. If there is a second parent, they can stand behind the photographer to try for different reactions when needed. Parents can take turns if they find they each get different faces from the baby.

Toddlers sometimes need a parent nearby, depending on the kid. Let mom or dad know that they can sit near or stand behind the photographer to help to get genuine expressions. If needed, gently let them know It's often best to let the kid do their thing and to let the photographer take the lead.

With **older children** and teenagers, sometimes it's easier if the parents step away. You can suggest that some kids may be more comfortable without an audience, you could even give the child the option to decide if they'd prefer to be on their own and to surprise their parents with the photos later, or if they'd like the parents to be close by. This puts the idea in the parent's head that it might be good to not put the pressure of an audience on the child. The photographer will invite the parent's in if they need help with genuine interactions.

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DURING THE SESSION

Pay attention to what is happening during the session so you can assess how you can best assist. Sometimes you are not needed at all. If it's going really well, stay out of it. Many times you will be needed to help change the dynamic of the situation. Always read the photographer and the child- you will likely bounce in and out of helping and standing back. Come up with a code word or phrase that the photographer can use to let you know if they would like some space to connect with the child themselves.

Babies & Toddlers: If there is only one parent, and they need to sit with the baby, you will almost always be needed to help bring out different faces. Wait and watch at the beginning. Sometimes you will be needed immediately and sometimes the baby will be interested in the camera so stay back and wait. We want to make sure we get a good selection of photos of them looking directly at the camera- if it's going well don't distract. Peek-a-boo, puppets, silly voices and singing songs are all great ways to engage with a baby when needed. Make sure you know some up-beat, fun songs as well as some softer more soothing lullabies. You and the photographer will need to find your way together.

Have a noise making toy nearby so that if you notice the baby is not into it, or about to cry, you can distract them. It works 90% of the time using a shaker egg, a crinkle toy, or a harmonica. Even a quick clap will often snap them out of a funk or grab their attention.

If the child is not giving much variety, you can use a puppet to tickle their ear, or the top of their head- do this quickly and then back out of the frame.

Any of the actions you do will need to be inline with where the photographer would like the baby to be looking. Don't stand too high, keep in mind the angle of the baby's face and eye line. Once you and the photographer have established your routine, this will all become intuitive.

3 and up: When they arrive you can assess their personality. If they are shy you may need to stay back for a while until they are warmed up. If they are very friendly, chatty, listening well, answering all the photographers questions, or giving great faces and body language, you may not need to participate. Pay attention, if you notice that you need to jump in with some songs, peekaboo, puppets, or jokes, you're ready! Many of the methods used with babies work really well for toddlers and young kids too. Tickle their ears, or give their hair a little scrunch with a puppet, there will surely be some cute reactions!

Pre-teens + Teenagers: They can be self conscious or uncomfortable with the idea of the camera. Assess their personality and decide what is needed from you in each situation. Often you will stay completely out of it and just chat with the parents so that they don't distract the child from the photographer's prompts and questions. We want them interacting with the photographer not distracted by their parents. Have some jokes on hand in case the photographer is having trouble getting genuine smiles. Even if the jokes are ridiculous it will invite a reaction. Listen to the interactions and if something comes up that you know about or can connect with them about- contribute to a genuine conversation.

*puppets are helpful and fun even with the older kids, you can make a joke about how you act with the little kids and do an impression of yourself- it will crack them up- or at least have them looking skeptical. All expressions are welcome!

OUTRO

Before the clients leave, make sure they have been told about the timeline of receiving the gallery and how it all works.

"Our editors pre-edit the images, when you receive the gallery and make your selections, the files will be ready for download. We estimate 4-5 weeks for the gallery to be sent to the email that you booked with."

Make sure you know what is included in the package incase they ask.

- They will receive a gallery of approximately 20 images to choose from
- 4 hi-res images, of their choice, come with their session.
- It is a good idea to mention that if they'd like, they can order more individual files or the full collection.
- Let them know to keep an eye out for the discount code for the full collection (if they order it within a few weeks of receiving their gallery, they get 20% off)
- They can also order prints directly from the gallery to be shipped to their home.

Always show gratitude for them coming out, and make sure to say good-bye directly to the child as well.

SOCIAL MEDIA

We are always looking for good content to share on social media. Please refer to the Behind the Scenes Shot List and take a look at our reels on Instagram, or via the link shared by the photographer.

**Before filming any children, be sure to confirm (on the schedule) that we have permission to share them online.

PASSERS BY

If you are in a pop-up location that has high traffic, don't be afraid to chat with the store's customers, be open to their interest and tell them about Little Icons. Feel free to show them our Instagram account. Educate people a bit about how we operate, our philosophy, and the upcoming schedule -if they are inquiring. Never be salesy. Genuinely share about the fun we have creating these gorgeous images and how the children's authenticity is what we are all about!

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