



## Family Photos on Display (Finally!)

You've got a smartphone packed with cherished moments, yet if you're like most parents, you rarely print favorite photos. Follow our easy advice for how to get your memories off your phone and into your real life!

by **PETRA GUGLIELMETTI**

### STEP 1

#### Edit

##### ● Make them pop.

"The easiest thing you can do to make prints look better is to brighten them," says Boston-based family photographer Kate Lemmon. Click "edit" in your phone or photo-editing application. Choose to adjust the "brightness" or "exposure" and move the slider just a little to the right to make the photo brighter.

##### ● Black and white is always right.

If a favorite shot isn't top-quality—there's graininess or blurriness—try converting it to black and white, which can instantly and artfully obscure flaws. Going black and white is also a foolproof way to create a cohesive look when hanging a group of photos together.

### STEP 2

#### Print

##### ● Choose the ideal size.

It can be hard to decide what subject matter will look good sized up, like a poster, versus scaled down, like a 4x6. "Family photos taken from farther away usually work best for large statement prints—think big landscape with tiny people," says Lemmon, who likes to print oversize images to hang above a sofa, sized to about two thirds of the sofa's width. Close-up and detail shots,

like teensy newborn feet, work best in frames no larger than 11x14.

### ● Consider your printing source.

Where to print depends on what you're using the photo for, says Shelly Niehaus, a Dallas photographer.

**GOOD** Quickie prints from kiosks are handy in a pinch, like when you need a new family photo to take into day care, but not the best for displaying at home.

**BETTER** For everyday, casual printing of snapshots, Niehaus refers her clients to Costco. The store has better quality and color than drugstores offer, and the prices can't be beat—from 17 cents for a 4x6 print to \$7 for poster sizes.

**BEST** For keepsake photos and long-term framers, try a professional-grade online lab like Mpix or Adorama. For just a bit more than you'd pay at a drugstore (19 to 29 cents for a 4x6), you'll get archival, acid-free materials that ensure the color quality holds up over time—plus more editing and finish options.

## STEP 3 Frame

### ● Know when to use mats.

Mats are great for frames you plan to hang on the wall. But skip them for tabletop frames, which are smaller in scale and don't need the extra layer that matting provides. "Mats add impact and help draw your eye right to the image, plus they



## THE BEST FRAMING STYLE FOR ...

### Candid and action shots

A simple black or white frame with a white mat highlights the movement in the image without trying to compete.

### Wedding and vintage

**photos** Metallic frames add sophistication while their glints of light play up photos that are softer-focus, muted, or subtle. "Try warm silver or rose gold," says Tessa Wolf, of Framebridge.

**School photos** "Be playful—choose a cherry-red frame, or lean into something über-classic, like

a traditional gold frame for an almost-ironic pairing with a silly first-day shot," Wolf says.

### Posed family portraits

A modern, no-frills frame in black or metallic keeps photos from looking too stiff, and don't go bigger than 11x14.

**Baby photos** Opt for a soft-colored frame and a white mat. "Consider a whitewashed wood, and think about adding a little monogram on the mat to celebrate baby milestones," Wolf suggests.

can cover up imperfections like wrinkled corners and uneven margins on old photos," says Tessa Wolf, creative director for Framebridge. You might also go mat-free for extra-large prints or when there's a large amount of white space near the edges of your photograph.

### ● Group similar images together.

Whether you're clustering frames on a mantel or a ledge or plotting a gallery wall, one way to create an appealing collection is to stick to one category, like all professional family portraits, all candid iPhone photos, or beautiful vacation images taken on your fancy digital camera. "Or look for shots with similar color profiles—bright, saturated outdoor pics or vintage-looking nighttime ones," Wolf says.



#### TIP!

To keep frames from going lopsided, put a little sticky tack on the back side.

### ● Do the same for frames.

Similarly, frames should share a vibe even if they don't match exactly. For instance, stick to wood frames in varying finishes, or group antique-looking brass frames in assorted shapes. "I like to use classic silver frames but in various sizes and styles," says interior designer Kerri Goldfarb, co-owner of Madre, a home-décor boutique in Dallas. Or go with the no-fail pick of white gallery-style frames, which brighten and polish any photo and work in just about any room.





## TECH TO TRY



### Selphy CP1300 printer

Whip out quality prints on a whim with this wireless, compact device (no need to open up your big printer to swap paper or adjust guides). *\$130; [shop.usa.canon.com](http://shop.usa.canon.com)*



### Nixplay Seed frame

Send this Wi-Fi-enabled digital frame to Grandma and she'll instantly see new photos you add from your phone via the iOS and Android app. *\$140 for an 8-inch screen; [nixplay.com](http://nixplay.com)*



### PicTapGo app

For natural-looking filter options, photographer Kate Lemmon likes the PicTapGo app and often applies the filter called Air. *\$3 for iOS and Android*

## STEP 4 Display

### ● Pick the right location.

When your pro family photo shoot turns out great, it's tempting to hang a huge print in the foyer. However, designers suggest saving personal images for more private spaces like a family room, a hallway, or a bedroom. "A non-prominent staircase or landing is a great spot for a gallery wall that you can add to over time," says Mia Brous, Madre co-owner.

### ● Position your frames.

The vertical center of any frame or grouping should be about 4 feet 9 inches from the floor, which is average eye level, Wolf says. If you're



hanging a frame above furniture, like a sofa or a cabinet, go about 8 inches above the piece so the art feels visually connected to the piece below—not just floating above it. Keep the spacing between a collection of frames at about 2 inches to make the frames feel like a group without being too close.

● **Treat 'em like accessories.**

You don't want a dozen frames to adorn your mantel or sideboard.

Like jewelry, less is more! About three to five frames on a shelf or a console is ideal, says Kaylan Kane, an interior designer in Chicago. Odd numbers of objects please the eye, so stay with a group of three. "I might use one framed photo mixed in with objects or books to add a little personal touch," Kane says. To achieve height and good spacing, you can layer coffee-table books in by setting frames on them.

## Print Some Albums Already!

"I always tell my clients that done is better than perfect," Niehaus says. "If you set out to make huge, complicated photo books each year, they will probably never get done."



**IF YOU LOVE INSTAGRAM**

Chatbooks links up to your feed and sends you a book every 60 images. "These books are my kids' favorite things in the house—we keep them in a basket on our coffee table," Niehaus says. *\$10 per soft-cover book, \$15 for hardcover*

**IF YOU'RE A PROCRASTINATOR**

Blurb lets you print a huge book (up to 440 pages), so you can include a whole year's worth of pics (with minimal picking and choosing). *From \$15 for 20 pages, then 20 cents per additional page*

**IF YOU HAVE A TIGHT BUDGET**

Download the Groovebook app and it will put your best shots into a soft 4x6

monthly photo book—just click your 40 to 100 favorites. Plus, perforated pages let you tear out faves to frame. *\$4/month*

**IF YOU'RE GIFTING AN ALBUM**

Zno's hard album pages lie flat, making this the ultimate brag book atop Grandma's coffee table; plus, you can add a sleek gift box. *From \$30 for a 6x6 album*

**IF YOU'RE DESIGN-OBSESSED**

Artifact Uprising lets you create albums that look like a pro photographer's, thanks to high-end printing, ample cover-design options, and luxe materials. *From \$59 for a hardcover book*