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danielle durand photography

what to wear for

Style Guide

newborn family photos

WHAT TO WEAR?

Choosing outfits for your newborn session can feel surprisingly overwhelming. You're already preparing for a new baby, navigating sleepless nights, and adjusting to life as a family. The last thing you need is stress over what everyone should wear. The good news? Your outfits don't need to be complicated to photograph beautifully. The best newborn family photos aren't created by expensive clothing or perfectly matching outfits. They're created by connection. Thoughtfully chosen clothing simply helps keep the focus where it belongs - on your baby and the people who love them most.

01 Always feel Comfortable

The most important thing to remember is that your clothing should reflect your own personal style. You should feel comfortable and wear something that makes you genuinely confident and happy. If you feel good, you will look good! Choose clothing that gives you freedom of movement and won't require a lot of maintenance throughout your session.

02 Keep Patterns Simple

When people look at your finished gallery, you want their eyes drawn immediately to your baby, not to a busy shirt or bold graphic. Large logos, graphics, neon colors, and busy patterns can quickly become distractions. Instead, choose solids, subtle florals, delicate prints, or gentle textures that add interest without competing for attention. If you're unsure whether a pattern is too busy, it's usually safest to choose something simpler.

03 Think About the Overall Style of Your Family

Your outfits should feel like they belong together. A flowing dress paired with a relaxed button-up shirt creates a completely different feel than a formal dress paired with a suit and tie. Neither is necessarily wrong, but consistency matters. Consider the overall vibe you want your images to have:

- Soft and romantic
- Light and airy
- Warm and earthy
- Classic and timeless
- Rich and colorful

When everyone's clothing fits the same general style, the final gallery feels more polished and intentional.

04 Pay Attention to Sleeves, Collars, and Details

Certain clothing details can become surprisingly distracting in photographs. For moms, oversized puff sleeves, bulky ruffles, or dramatic shoulder details can sometimes make it difficult to comfortably hold and snuggle your baby. For siblings, stiff collars and structured shirts often shift out of place when they're holding the baby or lying beside them. Instead of noticing the sweet interaction, your eye gets pulled toward the crooked collar. Simple, soft clothing tends to photograph best because it keeps the focus on the relationships rather than the wardrobe.

05 Skip the Matching Outfits

Perfectly matching outfits were popular years ago, but today's newborn portraits feel much more natural when everyone coordinates rather than matches. Think of your family's clothing as pieces of the same story. Colors should complement one another without looking identical. The goal is cohesion, not uniformity.

06 Choose classic over trendy

Think about choosing neutral, pastel colors and avoiding trends. Go for classic, timeless looks that will stand the test of time. The last thing you want is to look at your photos 10 - 20 years from now and question your fashion choices. I recommend staying away from logos, characters, or other selections that could date your portraits.

07 Avoid Bright Colours, Black, and Red

Some colors are simply harder to photograph well. Bright white can appear stark and lose detail in photographs. Solid black often lacks dimension and can feel visually heavy. Red is particularly tricky because it can reflect onto skin tones and create unwanted color casts. That doesn't mean you need to avoid these colors entirely, but they generally work best when used sparingly or balanced with softer tones. Cream, oatmeal, taupe, ivory, camel, dusty blue, sage, and muted earth tones tend to be much more flattering for newborn photography.

08 Choose Colors That Complement Your Baby

Color sets the overall mood of your images. Soft, muted tones tend to photograph beautifully because they keep attention on faces and connection rather than clothing. Shades like dusty blue, sage, olive, mauve, cream, camel, and warm taupe are all wonderful options. As you look through wardrobe inspiration, notice how most successful color palettes include a balance of neutrals and one or two accent colors. This creates visual interest without feeling overwhelming. When selecting colors, it's also important to consider your photographer's editing style. Soft, natural editing often pairs best with muted, earthy tones.

09 Look for Texture, Not Just Color

One of the easiest ways to elevate your newborn family photos is by incorporating texture. Texture adds depth and warmth without being distracting. Beautiful options include:

- Knits
- Linen
- Gauze
- Eyelet fabrics
- Soft cottons
- Ribbed fabrics
- Lightweight sweaters

These materials photograph beautifully because they create subtle visual interest while still feeling timeless. A cream knit sweater will almost always photograph more beautifully than a plain bright-white t-shirt.

10 Don't Stress About Shoes

Here's a secret: For most newborn family photos, shoes barely matter. The majority of newborn portraits are photographed fairly close so your baby remains the focus. Many images are cropped at the waist or knees. Unless you're specifically planning full-length family portraits, your footwear likely won't be visible at all. If shoes will be included, simply choose something clean, neutral, and appropriate for your outfit.

Remember That the Baby Is the Star

Parents often spend hours worrying about what everyone should wear, but the truth is that your baby will always be the center of attention. The goal of wardrobe planning isn't to create a fashion photoshoot. It's to create a soft, cohesive look that allows your family's connection to shine through. Simple colors, comfortable clothing, and thoughtful coordination will always win over trendy outfits that compete for attention

"The secret to great style is to feel good in what you wear."

— Ines de la Fressange

IT'S ALL IN THE DETAILS

01 Let's talk footwear

Shoes are a very important part of wardrobe and they make the whole look cohesive. Choose colors and styles that coordinate with the choice of your outfits. I generally suggest barefoot however for indoor newborn sessions.

02 Hair and make-up

Professional hair and makeup is a splurge but it is a decision you will never regret. What better excuse to pamper yourself than a photo session? The more confident you feel with the way you look, the more relaxed you will be in your photos.

03 The details count

Check your finger nails, you do not want chipped nail polish because it can be seen.!, make sure you have a pedicure too. Please steer clear of bright colors. Remember to iron the outfits. You are investing time and money into a custom portrait session, take the time to ensure everything has been reviewed.

04 Just relax and have fun

I want you to have fun picking your clothes. Use resources like Pinterest or photography websites for examples you like of coordinated families. Once you pick out your clothes, relax! Sit back and enjoy your session! Remember to have fun! Take a deep breath and let me do my job!

FAVORITE SHOPS

FOR MOM:-
Anthropologie-
Gap-
Nordstrom-
J.Crew-
Free People-
Zara-

FOR DAD:-
J Crew-
Banana Republic-
Old Navy/Gap-
Nordstrom

TIPS FOR DRESSING THE KIDS

01 Happy kids, happy photos

First and foremost make sure they like what they are wearing and that the clothes fit perfectly. They should also feel comfortable wearing the outfit you chose for them, especially the shoes. If your daughter doesn't like wearing dresses, don't force her to wear one for picture day. If your son thinks that suspenders or bow-tie is uncomfortable or silly, don't make him wear those. Happy kids make for happy photos!

02 Coordinate, but don't match

If you have multiple children, don't feel like you need to put them all in the same type of outfit. Mixing up the wardrobe pieces will bring a great visual interest to the photos. It also applies to everyone. Just avoid neon / very bright colors and character t-shirts etc.

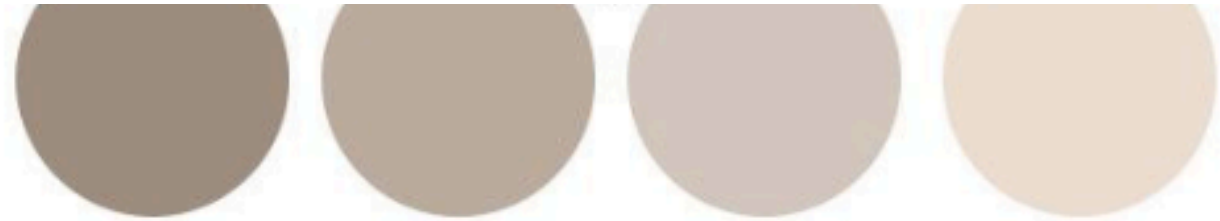
FAVORITE SHOPS FOR THE KIDS OUTFITS

Zara Kids-
Baby Gap-
H&M-
Old Navy-
Etsy

Overall tips ...

- Dress like yourselves, but at your best!- Look at the colors of your home- Go for more classic, neutral palette. Accessories are good, but remember less is more- Some patterns are ok but keep them minimal- Logos, character t-shirts are a NO!- Make sure everyone wears comfortable clothes, especially the kids!- Make sure your children feel comfortable in the outfits you chose for them.- Consider getting your hair & make-up done.- Ask for advice if you need it.

Newborn Colour Palette



Frequently Asked Questions

What colors are best for newborn family photos?
Soft, muted colors tend to photograph beautifully. Popular choices include sage green, dusty blue, mauve, olive, camel, terracotta, oatmeal, cream, navy, and warm taupe.

Should parents match for newborn photos?
No. Coordinating is much more flattering than matching. Choose colors that complement one another while allowing each family member to have their own look.

What should siblings wear for newborn photos?
Simple, comfortable clothing works best. Avoid stiff collars, large graphics, logos, or anything that may become distracting when they're holding or cuddling the baby. Soft fabrics and coordinated colors photograph beautifully.

Should I buy new clothes for newborn pictures?
Not necessarily. Many families are able to create beautiful wardrobe combinations using pieces they already own. That said, newborn photos are a special milestone you'll look back on for decades. If purchasing a new outfit helps you feel confident and excited about your session, it can absolutely be worth it.

What colors should I avoid?
Try to avoid solid black/dark, bright red, neon colors, and heavily saturated tones whenever possible. These colors can be difficult to photograph and may distract from your baby.

What if I have no idea what to wear?
Don't overthink it. Focus primarily on your upper half since most newborn family portraits are photographed fairly close. Because you'll often be holding your baby, your clothing becomes a supporting element rather than the main subject. Choose comfortable, coordinated colors and let the connection with your baby do the rest.

Thank you for downloading this complimentary What to Wear Guide.

I created this resource for my clients—and for any family in Calgary NW who feels unsure about how to dress for their newborn family photo session. Because the right outfits make all the difference in creating timeless, authentic portraits.

Hi, I'm Danielle Durand—a Calgary NW newborn, motherhood & family photographer who believes that great style starts with feeling comfortable and confident. If you found this guide helpful and are ready to book your own session, I would love to capture your family's story.

Let's create something beautiful together.

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