

# 5 Steps to Choosing Your Chicago Family Photographer

A Worksheet by Marmalade Photography



Use this worksheet for each photographer you are considering. The photographer with the highest score **AND** all Yes answers in Step 5 is your photographer. Any No in Step 5 means keep looking - regardless of total score.

PHOTOGRAPHER NAME

Enter name

WEBSITE

Enter website

DATE

March 19, 2026

Current Score

0 / 29

## STEP 1 — DEFINE YOUR STYLE PREFERENCE

No scoring — self-discovery

Complete this section once before researching photographers. Know what you want before you start looking - your answers are your reference guide for Step 2.

- Setting**       Studio  Lifestyle / In-Home  Outdoor  Mix
- Editing Style**       Bright & Airy  Rich & Moody  Natural / True-to-Life  No Preference
- Color vs B&W**       Color  Black & White  Mix of Both
- Formality**       Posed & Traditional  Candid & Documentary  Mix
- Wardrobe**       Formal & Coordinated  Casual & Relaxed  Mix

## STEP 2 — RESEARCH PHOTOGRAPHERS

0 / 5 pts

- Portfolio is consistent in quality across multiple sessions - not just a few highlight images +1 pt
- Willing to show a full session preview upon request +1 pt
- Has been in business 5+ years +1 pt
- Shows evidence of continuing education - workshops, industry involvement, ongoing creative development +1 pt
- Specializes in what I need - children, families, newborns, seniors, etc. +1 pt

Step 2 Score: 0 / 5

## STEP 3 — PERSONALITY FIT

0 / 8 pts

- Responsive and clear in communication - emails answered promptly, questions addressed thoroughly +2 pts
- Listens to my vision rather than pushing their own agenda +2 pts
- Shows genuine enthusiasm and interest in my family - not just another booking +2 pts
- Explains their process clearly - I know what to expect from session to delivery +2 pts

Step 3 Score: 0 / 8

**STEP 4 — INVESTMENT**

0 / 4 pts

- Took time to understand my family's specific needs before discussing investment +1 pt
- I understand what is included - session, products, digital files, timeline +1 pt
- The investment reflects their experience, expertise, and product quality +1 pt
- I feel confident in the value - this feels like an investment in artwork, not just a purchase +1 pt

Step 4 Score: 0 / 4

**STEP 5 — GUT CHECK**

0 / 12 pts

Every answer here must be Yes. A single No means keep looking - regardless of your total score. Your gut knows things your analytical brain might miss.

- Their work moves me emotionally - I feel something when I look at their images  Y  N +3 pts
- I feel heard and valued in every interaction with them  Y  N +3 pts
- I am genuinely excited about working with them - not just fine with it  Y  N +3 pts
- I can envision them capturing my family authentically - not performing, just being us  Y  N +3 pts

Step 5 Score: 0 / 12

**Total Score**

0 / 29

Complete the worksheet above to see your result.

**SCORE GUIDE**

24 – 29	Exceptional fit — trust your gut and book them
17 – 23	Strong contender — ask a few follow-up questions
10 – 16	Some concerns — proceed carefully
0 – 9	Keep looking

**NOTES**

Add any notes about this photographer here...

Marmalade Photography | marmaladephotography.com | Chicago Family &amp; Children Photography since 2005

This How to choose a Chicago Photographer worksheet by Marmalade Photography is © Marmalade Photography and may not be altered for usage without express permission from Marianne Drenthe/Marmalade Photography.

Looking for more guidance? Visit [professionalchildphotographer.com](http://professionalchildphotographer.com) for additional resources.