

# **HELPFUL IDEAS**

## **for**

### **APPROACHING a CHILD**

#### *About roles and games*

With each child, I initiate a game that is right for them. Roles are distributed depending on their characteristics and the situation in which we find ourselves. We can be partners, the child can be my assistant, and we do something together, like helping a child's mother. It is important that the child is aware of the distribution of roles, comfortable with these.

#### *Introduction to books and photography*

Photobook consists of two words: book and photo. Let's talk about them in more detail, starting with introduction a child to photography

Long before we start working with photobooks, I try to make books and photography part of our time . It's easier with books, but more difficult with photography. Little by little, implementing small photo projects, creating only positive emotions associated with that. It can be a

mistake to assume that any child will be happy with this innovation. There are those who openly resist.

For example,

"Can I take a picture of you?" - "No no!"

"Okay, can you take a picture of me, please?" - "No no!"

"Where is your favorite toy? Please let me take a picture of that" - "No no!"

It is important to monitor the mood of the child. If they are just playing, then you can continue:

"Well, can I take a picture of your pillow?"

But if it annoys them and they start to get angry, then you should not continue. Change the subject quickly, and ask:

"Do you want to go for a walk to the park? The weather is beautiful outside. "Yes, yes".

We go for a walk, my protégé is in a good mood, I take a camera, and from time to time I take pictures, not paying attention to the child. Over time, he becomes interested in what I'm doing. "Nothing, I need to take some pictures for my grandson, whose birthday is next week."

The next time I visit, the first thing I ask is: "Maybe you can help me a little?" - "Yes".

“Remember when you and I went for a walk in the park and I took some pictures for my grandson? I want to make a greeting card for him. But I don't know how to glue it and am bad at it. I saw how good you are at cutting and gluing, can you help me?”

"Yes! Yes!".

“Um, you hold the glue bottle in such an interesting way, I would never have guessed. Can I take a photo so I don't forget how you do it?”

"Yes".

The child voluntarily agreed to be photographed. No negative emotions. Then he will do something else exceptional, the main thing is not to miss the moment. So photography will enter his life as a pleasant, useful, or entertaining activity.

At the initial stage, it does not matter what to photograph. It is important to create positive emotions. That is why any negative emotions should be immediately replaced with something pleasant.

I make a clown of myself if necessary; I search and try, not knowing if the child will join my game, I follow very carefully which role they will prefer in this game.

Once I "replayed" and missed the moment, when working with an autistic boy of ten who spoke little and was clearly capable of taking pictures himself. I couldn't wait to teach him how to use the camera, which he didn't want to. I also tried to have him take a picture of himself in front of a mirror with my help and hoped he would like it. I didn't notice he was rather angry. I caught the camera on the fly. Then he tried long and hard to get revenge on me for such an ugly act but did not succeed.

He wasn't angry, he just threw things on the floor and watched my reaction - there wasn't any. "Oh, you dropped the book! Poor book!" In the end, he took my winter hat and promised to throw it out the window. I no longer allowed this, I had to fight a little, saving the hat.

He taught me a wonderful lesson, and we returned to photography only a few months later. During this time, I revised the tactics, and as a result, he voluntarily joined the process, with pleasure.

## *Experiments and improvisations are part of the system*

Rick, the father of an autistic girl, wanted his daughter Samantha to take up photography, so he was looking for a way to get her involved. They lived in another state and we communicated via the Internet. He often talked about Samantha, and I had some ideas about her. Finally we decided to give it a try.

I suggested using a pleasant and important event for this - mom's birthday. Samantha loves her mother and wants to please her on the holiday. Rick suggested that she give her mother flowers, which grew in their yard. Samantha could choose flowers for her mom and Rick could take a picture of her. It turned out that Samantha didn't want to go out. So Rick brings flowers home for her.

He gives them to Samantha and invites the girl to choose the flowers she likes. When she collects the whole bouquet, Rick says, "What nice flowers you chose! Let me take a picture of you and these beautiful flowers." Rick knows that Samantha loves to pose for the camera.

Later, Mom arrives and Rick invites Samantha to give her flowers. As she presents the gift, Rick discreetly takes a photo. Mom is happy. She can thank her daughter for the

flowers, hug and kiss, pat on the head - Rick captures all the joyful moments on film. For a good photobook about mom's birthday, you need to take a lot of photos: a child in a garden with flowers and bright flower beds.

Mom asks to take a picture of her with Samantha and flowers, which Rick does. Then mom takes the camera and says that we need to take a picture of dad too: "Now it's his turn to take pictures." Mom helps Samantha with a camera: "Today you will succeed, you did such a great job with flowers, you are our hero! ... You see, dad is smiling, let's make dad happy! You see dad in the window! We press the button together. Now let's give dad flowers! Let's take a picture of dad with flowers! He looks great! Please click this button! Let's try!"

Mom carefully helps Samantha press the button, but if there is the slightest resistance, she should just quietly press the button herself. "Hooray! You took the first picture! Please, Rick, print these pictures for us - it's a great birthday present."

This was the suggested scenario. Unfortunately, Rick failed; he didn't dare surrender to the will of improvisation. Even though the parents loved Samantha very much and took care of her, they followed the

instructions of the specialists in everything. They had instructions for all occasions: how to act, what to say - they were hostages of strict rules. I didn't give exact instructions, and Rick was confused - he was used to following rules. Samantha quickly gave the flowers to her mother and left. Rick did not have time to take a picture and was upset. He asked me to give him detailed instructions on what to do and say in various expected situations.

Remember: when creating photobooks, you cannot use manuals, instructions with a list of step-by-step actions. Although in other systems clear instructions can be helpful, there are plenty of opportunities to make contact without their assistance.

Don't be afraid to experiment. If you decide to follow the path of gaining trust and establishing real friendly contact with your child, your efforts will be rewarded a hundredfold. Yes, unpredictability awaits you, but at the same time - pleasant surprises, unexpected events, and miracles.

Expectations built in advance, planning for success can be very detrimental to work with, because disappointments are inevitable, as seen with Rick, and fear of failure.

Excessive focus on the result can also interfere with establishing contact with the child. You will not get an immediate effect, but everything you do for this is good. Children feel the disappointment of an adult and can take it personally. The main thing is to develop all the achievements that arise during joint activities. An unsuccessful result can always be turned to good.

“Oh, what a pity that this photo did not come out. But now we know how to succeed. This is a good lesson. Let's celebrate with our favorite ice cream!”

### ***Photobook "Best Friends"***

Rick, like any parent, wanted his daughter to have friends. I suggested that he offer such a photo project at the school where his daughter studied.

“Mary likes Jane and would like to befriend her, but she doesn't know how. Therefore, we gather a group of children and make a photobook about what friendship is. At the same time, we choose Mary and Jane as the main characters of this photobook. The photos featured in this friendship story show what Mary does to win Jane's friendship, from the way they meet, spend time together, watch videos, play games, help each other, or share a



treat. It is difficult to predict, but who knows, maybe after creating such a photobook they will become friends. This is already a super task, the important thing is that in the process of creating it, children have a wonderful time together and learn what friendship is and how to create this.

Thus, a teacher or a child who can take pictures takes pictures of the girls spending time together. If the teacher can get really interested, they may invite them to pose for pictures, including with other children, in the hope that they will enjoy interacting with them. Hoping the children will become friends after the project is over. The photobook will remain with them as a living memory of warm human relationships and clear advice on what to do finding friends.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to implement such projects at school, as teachers must follow a certain educational program. At home, with parents, there is much more freedom for creativity.