

My name is Melissa and I have a 10 year old son with severe autism. I feel incredibly fortunate that Christine Gribble gave our son the opportunity to be photographed for her accreditation. Michael can be easily agitated. Especially when he is made to sit still, be somewhere that is not stimulating to him or confused about expectations we may have for him. His autism can make a photo session seem insurmountable if the photographer is not flexible and understanding. We have come across this inflexibility, which is why we have never had a decent portrait of Michael.

Christine Gribble has a peaceful and accepting spirit. She met us at a park, which was ideal for my son, and she met us at a time which works for him as well. As he explored the park and his surroundings, she followed him, camera in hand. Her smiles and praise gave Michael a sense of acceptance and he responded by letting go of his anxiety and he found that he could be at ease with Christine. As he played with his big brother (she was gracious to include my other son as well), Christine captured Michael's spirit, his uniqueness, and his sweet personality that autism doesn't allow others to see at times. In fact, when Christine showed me the many beautiful portraits she captured of my son, I became emotional. I was emotional because I know that my son is beautiful and full of charisma but sometimes my son's behaviors and autistic tendencies hide his beauty.

Christine also captured my sons' relationship. I was hoping for a nice picture of my boys together, but what Christine gave me was so much more. When you have a child with severe autism in the family, the sibling relationship is very different and your hope is that they will be able to develop a relationship. The boys' relationship is not built on words but one on kindness, patience and grace. They communicate through warm smiles, silly gestures and Michael is always looking for his big brother's approval. I couldn't believe that Christine was able to capture their relationship the way that she did. All the tenderness and love they feel for each other is captured in her pictures. I am so proud of those pictures! Other than my husband and my boys, they have become my most prized possessions.

Sincerely,

Melissa