



THE INDEPENDENT

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Children
Too much, too young?

INSIDE Growing up, in pictures / Eat yer greens! / Toddler couture / School for geniuses / The crimewave kid



AS TIME GOES BY
Clockwise from far left,
Daisy Honey in 1988,
aged 9; in the garden at
the family's home in Bath,
1980; playing with a doll,
1989; day-dreaming,
1986; washing the dog,
1991; sleeping, 1985

We've all got them – the fat-kneed toddler, the forced-smile school photos, the teenage fashion aberrations ... For most of us, the pictures we have of ourselves as children show our development in a series of special occasions, invariably accompanied by an embarrassing outfit. But what happens when a professional photographer turns her camera on her child? And what happens to a girl who grows up with her whole life – including “personal” moments such as trying on her first bra – immortalised in pictures?

Daisy Honey was born in 1979. At the time, her American-born mother was a painter, who photographed her baby daughter with as much frequency and pride as other parents, but no more. The “Daisy” project formally began on holiday in Portugal in 1985, when Honey, who by then had begun to study photography, spotted the shadow pattern of leaves on her daughter's back. For a while she photographed the whole family – including Daisy's brother Jesse – but she and Daisy laugh when they recall the time Jesse's patience with having a camera poked in his face ran out. It never returned. For the most part, says Nancy, the photographs of Daisy (who in contrast proved to be an extraordinarily compliant subject) were triggered by fortuitous happenings – fantastic light that day, for example – hence the spontaneity of their images. Honey, though, has occasionally used Daisy in her commercial work.

Amazingly, out of the 2,000 or so photographs Nancy has of her daughter there are only a handful of “Oh Mum, stop, I'm too tired” shots. For the most part they are a tender portrait of a mother and daughter relationship, and a celebration of burgeoning womanhood. Daisy, who's now 22 and works as a dog behaviourist, is proud of her photos and loves looking at them. She's not vain or spoilt or embarrassed (even by the “first bra” photograph). But even a subject this willing has her cringe moments: “The one with the lipstick, for example. I like the picture, but that hairdo really needs sorting out.”

