

Children's notebook by Daisy Bridgewater

GLAMOUR GIRL I Love Gorgeous is the sort of company to avoid if you are the mother of sons. Famous for its floaty, bohemian party frocks, it will make you yearn for a little girl to dress up. If you do have a girl and are looking for a party outfit, the company is taking orders up until midday on December 23 and guarantees next-day delivery. Dresses cost from about £50, for ages 1-15 years (ilovegorgeous.co.uk).

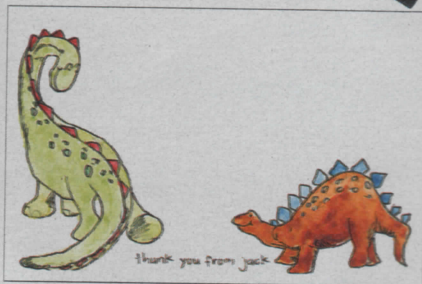
TRIED AND TESTED Here are three portable high chairs to take the stress out of eating away from home with small children. The Totseat (£23.50; totseat.com) is a compact fabric harness that secures a child to a chair (though they won't necessarily be able to see over the table). For more in the way of restraint try the foldaway Baby Polar Gear on the Go booster seat (left, £17.99; mothercare.com), which is secure enough for even the most escape-focused toddler. Finally, the Antilop (£11.99; ikea.com) has no footrest (so a toddler will be unable to stand up), and the removable legs mean it can be dismantled and flung in the back of a car. Not designed as a portable chair, it is affordable enough to leave at your in-laws' for next time.



SWEET DREAMS Children's sleeping arrangements can be difficult when travelling. Dream Tubes are a great invention: essentially a cotton over-sheet plus two inflatable tubes that are zipped into pockets in the sheet to stop anyone going bump in the night. A single-bed set costs £40, a cot-bed set costs £35. Both fold to laptop size (duskymoon.com).



I delight in making my children suffer the same burden that I did as a child of writing Christmas thank-you letters. Order delightful personalised thank-you cards from nessiemacley.co.uk and the task may not seem so impossible. A set of eight personalised dinosaur cards and envelopes costs £4.95.



JACKET REQUIRED Over Christmas there are always occasions when a little formal dressing gives untold amounts of pleasure, not least to the grandparents. For something inexpensive this double-breasted wool coat is unbeatable (six months to six years, £28, Boots and minimode.co.uk). The Portuguese company Papo d'Anjo (papodanjo.com) has a lovely selection of classic velvet and corduroy jackets (from £109, at Harrods). They are expensive, but worth it if there are younger brothers waiting for the hand-me-downs.

BRANCHES GREEN This recycled cardboard Christmas tree for a tabletop (50cm high) by Totem is a perfect antidote to gaudy plastic baubles and bells. It costs £29.99 from kindtoys.co.uk and is guaranteed never to drop its needles.

