



35 HEADSTART GRADUATE (1978)  
Tom Fields

*RII:* Two photographs by Tom Fields talk about these issues in modern terms. This first one is the **Headstart Graduate** (Plate 35). Here's a little Indian kid, graduating from early education. Parents and relatives are obviously very proud of him. In one sense it represents the total extreme that we have adopted, not knowing what kind of education he got and how much his culture had to play in it, but yet we have made graduation a rite of passage.

Contrast this scene with the other photograph of cutting the hair of Tom's son. When I first saw **Boyhood Separation** (Plate 36) I thought, did he stage that, how did he get his son to agree? I found out later the kid wanted to do it. By photographing it Tom is recalling what had happened generations earlier when they were forced to cut their hair; an interesting turn around.

*TL:* I think Tom has really captured the sense of the act. Today there are different kinds of uniforms. There isn't that kind of distinction anymore. There is not individual style dress; they do wear short hair.

This young 8 year old Native boy felt it was time to cut his braid. His hair had been kept so long so he would have his birth hair until his placement into his tribes dance society. This poignant moment is a metaphor for many cultural separations native people endure. — Tom Fields



36 BOYHOOD SEPARATION (1998)  
Tom Fields