

Designers take child's-eye view

Kids find spring fashion is spiffy

What do little boys and girls like? Why, Popeye, parrots, sweatshirts and baggie jeans.

They may be too young to recall when the last decade started, but the younger generation, has strongly held fashion ideas about how to start this one.

According to one proprietor of a children's clothing store, they may not be able to read, but they can recognize labels.

"We had one 3-year-old girl who refused to wear anything but Calvin Klein."

Susan Weinberg, owner of Devils and Darlings in the Franklin Plaza in Southfield, believes that peer pressure and mother power are what sets young fashion minds.

"If a mother wears baggie jeans, then she wants them for her child and the child learns to ask for them," she said. "Kids also notice what their friends wear at school. They want to look like their peers."

Mrs. Weinberg said that parrots and Hawaiian prints are big trends this spring with bright reds and pur-

ples still high on the fashion hit parade.

At Rainbow Lollipop in Somerset Mall, hand-made items are popular. Children and mothers alike enjoy the exclusivity of appliques, hand-painting of items of apparel.

LINDA SCHLESINGER of Rainbow Lollipop said Popeye is turning up on everything, jogging suits are good for both boys and girls, baggy pants are the rage and "the biggest thing of all is the sweatshirt."

"They're going to come in studded,

painted and air-brushed. Sweatshirts will be an important market."

Like their big sisters and mothers, little girls will be little girls in dresses. Many are shown in long-to-the-ankle and super feminine styles touched with lace and worn with espadrilles.

And the added touch with accessories continue strong. Girls will tuck a pretty bow or barrette in their hair, tie on a bright belt, add the right shoes or colored tights, and hang onto a pretty purse to complete the look.

The romance with comfort continues. Children like the feel of cotton, said Thelma Stalburg of New Generation in Applegate Square.

"We're seeing lots of terry cloth, the casual look, action sportswear and designer jeans," she said.

"You can't get kids to wear layers in spring and summer, but the preppy look is going to come in strong next fall," she said.

Comfort translates into a continuing preference for natural fabrics, play clothes that can take a beating, one piece outfits and many unisex ensembles that keep admirers asking, "Is it a boy or a girl?"

LIKE THAT little girl who likes Calvin Klein, the preteens are eyeing the new designer clothes available for them. The Diane Von Furstenberg collection of T-shirt dresses for girls in geometric designs and with the DVF signature is in the girls' department at Lord and Taylor in sizes 7 to 14 and teen sizes as well.

Those who sell clothes to children say that kids, by and large, know what they want. They talk among themselves and know what's in.

So when you take your youngster shopping, try to guide them, but never force them to buy what you like. It's apt to stay in the drawer or closet.

Since clothes are a personal expression, don't buy Popeye when it's a parrot your child wants.

— Shirlee Iden



Nautical looks command special attention this season with crisp white pique accented by bold polka dots and bright red satin ribbons. For girls, 4-6X at larger JCPenney stores.

Hats on for Spring!



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DESIGNS THAT DAZZLE



Betsy Kubat and Jennifer Kirschenbaum sport bright raincoats by Fabil, made of rubber-like fabric for water repellancy with oversized zippers and hoods. Betsy's has a Sunshine Sue

on the back and a garden on the front, while Jennifer's has layered umbrellas. Just the thing for spring rollerskating through the puddles. From Rainbow Lollipop, Troy.

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