

# Barbie To Add More Dolls With Disabilities

by Shaun Heasley | May 17, 2022

The iconic lineup of Barbie dolls is expanding to include more with disabilities.

Mattel said this month that it is releasing the first Barbie doll with behind-the-ear hearing aids. The toymaker is also introducing a new doll with a prosthetic leg.

The offerings are part of the Fashionistas collection, which includes over 175 looks that vary in skin tone, eye color, hair color and texture, body type, disability and fashion, Mattel said.



*The Barbie Fashionista line features dolls with more than 175 different looks, including some with disabilities. (Mattel)*

“Barbie wholeheartedly believes in the power of representation, and as the most diverse doll line on the market, we are committed to continuing to introduce dolls featuring a range of skin tones, body types and disabilities to reflect the diversity kids see in the world around them,” said Lisa McKnight, executive vice president and global head of Barbie and dolls at Mattel. “It’s important for kids to see themselves reflected in product and to encourage play with dolls that don’t resemble them to help them understand and celebrate the importance of inclusion.”

The Fashionistas line has included a Barbie that uses a wheelchair since 2019. At the time, Mattel said the device was one of the most requested features from consumers. The company indicated that it worked with Dr. Jen Richardson, an educational audiologist, to ensure accurate representation in the doll with behind-the-ear hearing aids.

In addition to expanding the Barbie offerings with disabilities, new Fashionistas this year will feature smaller bust, curvy and original body types and the brand is adding a Ken doll with vitiligo, a condition that causes patches of skin to lose color, as well as options with rooted short hair and a slender body type.

The new Barbie Fashionista dolls are now available at all major retailers.

Source: <https://www.disabilityscoop.com/2022/05/17/barbie-to-add-more-dolls-with-disabilities/29859/>

A. Read the article “Barbie To Add More Dolls With Disabilities” and fill out the following organizer from the [Natural Inquirer](#) to understand how news articles present their information:

**Headline** – usually only four or five words. It tries to attract the interest of the reader by telling them what the story is about, in a short and interesting way.

- What is the headline for your article? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How many words are in the headline? \_\_\_\_\_

**By-line** – who wrote the article

Who wrote your article? \_\_\_\_\_

**Introduction** – It will set the scene and summarise the main points of the article: who, what, when, where.

- Can you identify these important points in your article?
  - Who is the article about? \_\_\_\_\_
  - What happened? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - When did it happen? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Where did it happen? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Body** – provides more detail about the event, in particular it answers the questions how and why.

- What else do you know now? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Quotes** – sometimes articles will include what a person (like an eye-witness or an expert) has said. These will be in speech marks.

• Does your article have quotes? If so

• What was said? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

• Who said it? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

• How are they related to the event? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Photograph and caption** – sometimes articles have a photograph, and a sentence explaining the photograph

• Does your article have a photograph? What does it show – describe exactly what you see?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

• What does the caption say? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

B. Discuss the following questions in a group or write a journal response:

1. Lisa McKnight is quoted in the article as saying “It’s important for kids to see themselves reflected in product and to encourage play with dolls that don’t resemble them to help them understand and celebrate the importance of inclusion.” How big of an impact do you think these dolls will have on kids with disabilities? How about kids without disabilities?
2. The article states that “The company indicated that it worked with Dr. Jen Richardson, an educational audiologist, to ensure accurate representation in the doll with behind-the-ear hearing aids.” Why do you think this was an important detail to mention?
3. Sarah Kim, writing for [Forbes.com](https://www.forbes.com), observes that “If the true meaning of diversity and inclusion was at the forefront of Mattel’s mission, the toy manufacturer would have included dolls with disabilities when it originally launched the Barbie Fashion line in 2016, as part of its campaign to feature ‘curvy’ and darker-skinned dolls.” Do you agree or disagree with this criticism?
4. Go to [www.mattel.com](http://www.mattel.com). Do you think that the Barbies (and other toys being sold) represent the people in your community? If not, what would you add?