

Barbie launches first dolls with vitiligo and behind-the-ear hearing aids

Toymaker Mattel announced that the Barbie brand has introduced its first Barbie doll with a behind-the-ear hearing aids and a Ken doll with vitiligo, as part of the expanded Fashionistas line.



Source: Supplied



Continuing the brand's journey to represent global diversity and inclusivity in the fashion doll aisle, and to allow kids to play out even more stories they see in the world around them, the Fashionistas lineup includes the two new additions, as well as a new Fashionista doll with a prosthetic leg and Ken options with rooted short hair and a slender body type.

The Barbie Fashionistas line is where the Barbie brand delivers the most diversity and inclusion, and since its inception, more than 175 looks have been introduced, reflecting a variety of skin tones, eye colours, hair colours and textures, body types, disabilities, and fashions to choose from.

This is the first Barbie doll to be introduced with behind-the-ear hearing aids, further expanding the line to reflect people with disabilities, such as hearing loss. In addition to the doll with behind-the-ear hearing aids, this year's Fashionistas lineup includes new dolls in a variety of body types including smaller bust, curvy and original.

In 2020, the brand introduced a Fashionista Barbie with vitiligo, which was one of the top five best-selling Fashionistas in the US that year. This year, Barbie has expanded the offering to include a Ken doll with vitiligo to allow more storytelling.



Driving representation

Dr Jen Richardson, a leading authority in educational audiology adds “I’m honoured to have worked with Barbie to create an accurate reflection of a doll with behind-the-ear hearing aids. As an educational audiologist with over 18 years of experience working in hearing loss advocacy, it’s inspiring to see those who experience hearing loss reflected in a doll. I’m beyond thrilled for my young patients to see and play with a doll who looks like them.”



Barbie collabs with SA's Gert-Johan Coetzee on fashion collection

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Lisa McKnight, executive vice president and global head of Barbie and dolls at Mattel, said, “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.

“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.”

Barbie and Ken Fashionista assortment dolls will be sold in toy stores with SRP of R249.99 starting in June 2022.

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