

Dolls for All: Mattel's New Gender-Neutral Barbie

By: Paige Platter



Mattel has been in a more progressive way of thinking lately with Barbie's Youtube channel discussing things like mental health, plus-size Barbie dolls and now a gender-neutral one. The new gender-neutral doll will come in six different skin tones, hair, and clothing. They're part of the new line of "Creatable World" dolls which will reflect the positivity of inclusion. (Mattel). Kim Culmone, the senior vice president of Mattel, said, "This line allows all kids to express themselves freely, which is why it resonates so strongly with them," however, they're not representing everyone.

The doll will come in six skin tones, however, they're still those tiny waisted, stick figures, dolls which is a terrible model for developing children. It's not just Mattel either, it's all media, showing women as sticks which makes kids want to be that weight. Unless you're genetically disposed to being skinny and underweight, those weights are achieved through starving yourself, plastic surgery, and dehydration. Something children should not be subjecting themselves to. So are these dolls all that good?

There are companies out there such as Curvy Girls Dolls, an up and coming fashion doll company, that makes truly inclusive dolls. Obviously all of their dolls are plus-size, but they're real plus-size. Unlike Mattel's size 6/8 dolls, these dolls are size 18/20. But their dolls are more than that, for collectors they have stories. Such as Keiko, a Japanese, autistic, engineer, who's allergic to cats so she builds her own. Sure if you buy the doll to play with you can make their own story, but it's still an amazing thing to have. (Curvy Girls Dolls FAQ). Yes, the dolls are obviously female, but you can be assigned female at birth (AFAB) and still be non-binary or trans. Their doll, Alex isn't even AFAB, she's a transwoman which means she was assigned male at birth (AMAB). How is Mattel going to make a truly non-binary doll? Is the doll not going to have breasts? That would just make it a male-bodied doll. You can't make a non-binary doll with what they use, they're too gender-less already.



You can change the clothes on a Barbie, you can cut their hair, you can do anything you want to a Barbie to change her looks. Put a skirt on your Ken doll, give Barbie an undercut. Make them look like you and love who you are.

Mattel is trying though. They're trying to represent everyone and I think that's what we should take away from this. Mattel is trying to show us how to be inclusive and acceptive of other people. Maybe it's time we started listening.