



Hello, dolly

High-tech offers line of communication

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HIGH-TECH HAS infiltrated infant infatuations. Dolls are now not only hugged and squeezed, but programmed.

The new ones being promoted for the holiday season talk and walk with microcomputer-based "artificial intelligence." Interactive is the operative word.

Take "Baby Talk" from Lewis Galoob Toys, for example. The 18-inch doll is voice-activated, with varied vocal responses in addition to animated facial expressions. She asks to be picked up, lets you know when she wants to eat, then says "more, Mommy" if she doesn't get enough. She says, "I'm sleepy" and automatically shuts herself off if left alone for a short time.

A COMPANION IS "Smarty Bear," who answers with "Positively," "You're the greatest," "For sure," and "Hey, turn me over" when held upside

down, among its 16 programmed responses. He giggles, too, when "activated" in a ticklish spot, like real people.

Not all is high-tech, however. Old-fashioned batteries, of course, are necessary — four C batteries and four AA batteries. A panda named "Sing-Sing," from Audex Corp., recognizes predetermined questions and answers on the basis of its electronic random access memory. "Oh, yes; let's have fun" is its response to "Do you want to play?" for example.

In addition, say its creators, a specific request, "Tell me a story," automates a built-in cassette player with a story, song or recorded lesson.

The high-tech doll market this year also offers "Teddy Ruxpin" and "AG Bear" from World of Wonder. They mouth in sync with audio cassettes.

DOLLS OF A different sort:

"Hal's Pals" are specially designed for disabled children. Mattel, Inc., has formed a not-for-profit corporation

called For Challenged Kids by Mattel, Inc. to produce and market "Hal's Pals," five 19-inch, soft-sculptured dolls, each with a different disability.

"Hal," for instance, is a ski instructor with one leg. One of his pals is a dancer who wears a hearing aid; another wears leg braces and walks with canes.

All anticipated profits from sales of the dolls will be distributed to organizations for children with disabilities, says Arthur S. Spear, chairman of the chief executive, Mattel Inc.

The first character-licensed learn-and-play dolls from the Muppets are "Baby Kermit" and "Baby Miss Piggy." They can be zipped, snapped, tied, buttoned and buckled.

THE "VEGGIES" are soft-sculpture dolls in the shape of fruits and vegetables. Graphics designer Kim Foster says she created the prototypes out of actual produce.

They include Cornelia Husk, resembling an ear of corn, ballerina Zuccari-

na (zucchini), Sheriff Damon Onion, and Tony Scallione (scallion).

"Fluppy Dogs" and "Fluppy Puppies" are shaggy dog dolls created by Kenner-Parker Toys in conjunction with Walt Disney Productions.

Kenner is also introducing "Shimmers" fantasy dolls. And their "Care Bears" are back.

"JEM" is a new rock 'n' roll fashion doll, from Hasbro. She and her musical group, "The Holograms," have their own songs on an audio tape cassette that comes with the dolls.

SMOKEY the Bear, the watchbear of forest fires, is now 42 years old. He's available as a soft, child-safe teddy bear, a stuffed replica in three sizes.

A percentage of the sale of the bears goes to the U.S. Forest Service to help the agency develop educational materials and school aids to further Smokey's cause.

Smokey replicas can be found in specialty gift shops, at national parks and museums.

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