

MALLS & MAINSTREETS



Dr. Barbie: Mattel will contribute \$1 million from Barbie sales in 1994 to several national children's health care organizations. Dr. Barbie takes care of a newborn patient with a stethoscope that makes a heartbeat sound.

Did you have a Barbie?

"No, I never owned a Barbie doll. Does that make me culturally deprived? I had three older brothers so play centered on sports. I had a baby doll, but I just never played much with dolls."

— Jennifer Moore, Business Editor, WDIV-TV

"I was never into Barbie. I spent my childhood reading, starting clubs in the neighborhood and playing school."

— Gayle Hauser, Director, Troy Chamber of Commerce

"No way. I thought Barbie was weird. I had an older brother that I tried to keep up with so I played softball, basketball, kickball. My cousin who was also my best friend, loved Barbie, though. I recently bought her daughter her first Barbie and Ken."

— Rhonda Verona, President, RSVP Public Relations

"Yes, I played with Barbie. I especially enjoyed making her clothes myself and acting out teenage scenarios."

— Sonia Fone, Therapist

"I had a Barbie and I cut her hair off when I was 8. That was that. I never played with her. I was clue-less when I went across the street and saw the other girls acting out all kinds of scenarios with their Barbies for hours. I preferred to build tree forts, play kick ball and play with my stuffed animals. I also liked to play spies."

— Margaret O'Brien, Reporter, Southfield Economic

"Yes, I liked playing Barbie. I've always loved fashion and shopping, too — although I'm almost afraid to admit that in light of all the negative publicity Barbie gets from feminists. She was fun."

— Janice Hayes, Public Relations, Jacobson's

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explained. "And she comes out with something new every few months following the latest crazes across the nation, like Roller-Blading Barbie, Foot Stompin' Barbie and Camper Barbie, to name a few. The years have not diminished Barbie's popularity. She keeps beat with the times."

Former Barbie devotees Beth Kramer, 19, of Farmington Hills and Lisa Kitan, 13, of West Bloomfield also rejected the idea that playing Barbie harmed their development.

"Barbie was just plain fun," Kramer said. "We had hundreds of Barbies. We dressed them up, sent them out on dates and got them ready for job interviews. We played Barbie for hours."

Sonia Fone of Farmington Hills, a psychotherapist at the Center for Contemporary Psychology in Birmingham, cautioned that playing Barbie sends a wrong message to young women that materialism is what it's all about, and "to be ideal, you need lots of things attached to you — a pink sports car, a Malibu beach house, a big dressing room loaded with designer outfits."

"Barbie was created in 1959 to help teens play out high school roles," Fone said. "She was a popular teenager in the '60s. Now it's hard to tell what she is. Barbie is this entity. She had no developmental age."

Alice Allen of Westland was shopping for a Barbie for her granddaughter Sherry, 6, of Livonia.

"Barbie is the only thing that Sherry plays with for hours," Allen said. "She has a few other dolls but Barbie gets all the attention. I don't think Barbie is a bad influence. She comes in all colors these days and all different careers. And after all, she's just a toy."

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