

Sales of used children's items growing

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For parents looking for bargains for their children, gently used items are increasingly easy to find.

Resale outlets are cropping up all over the area, selling such items as clothing, shoes, toys, baby equipment and furniture.

Consumers who buy used items say these outlets are a great way to not only get rid of items they no longer need, but to find new things at a good price. Often, parents will sell items hoping to make enough to cover what they want to buy.

Kelly Coones, a Youngsville mother of two, buys used children's items not only to save money but also to teach her kids lessons.

"Kids grow fast, and clothes are expensive new," said Coones. "Consignment sales are a great way to stay in the family budget and teach kids that value isn't always in a dollar amount."

Experts say the industry is growing locally and nationally.

The National Association of Resale & Thrift Shops reports that sales of gently used children's items is an industry that is growing 5 to 10 percent a year. America's Research Group, a consumer research firm, reports that 12 to 15 percent of Americans shop at a consignment/resale store at least once a year. That's compared to about 11.4 percent who shop in factory outlet malls, 16 to 18 percent who shop in thrift stores, 20 percent of consumers who shop in apparel stores, and 21.3 percent who go to major department stores.

The industry is not new locally. Around Again Consignments on E. Millbrook Road has been serving the North Raleigh community for 16 years.

But it is growing. Kelly Rives, owner of the Divine Consign Show, said that in two years her business, which sets up in various locales, has gone from selling 300 items to 3,400 per event.

The area's largest sale, The Kids Exchange, began on Millbrook Road in North Raleigh before moving to the N.C. State Fairgrounds.

"People are realizing that you've got to get those boxes out of your house and you might as well get something for them," said Rives.

HOW IT WORKS

Used items can be sold from retail storefronts, which are either 'resale' or 'consignment' in nature.

Resale shops offer cash outright for anything purchased by the store. For consignment shops, the seller retains ownership of items of a period of time and is paid after the sale is made. The seller is responsible for leftover items.

Another option is a consignment sale in which consumers gather at season intervals to resell outgrown items. Without a permanent venue, these sales migrate to large, rented spaces in high-traffic areas, publicizing the sale before each event.

Child-centric second-hand stores:

- Around Again Consignments, 1830 E. Millbrook Road, 872-7283, www.aroundagain.com
 - Children's Orchard, 6132 Falls of Neuse Road, 876-8550, www.childrensorchar.com
 - The Kangaroo Pouch, 471-0322, 2812 Guess Road, Durham, www.thekangaropouch.com
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Consignment sales:

- Divine Consign, 272-3070, www.divineconsignshow.com. The next show is scheduled for Sept. 6-8, 2007 at the Northbrook Country Club, 4905 North Hills Drive.
- Jr. Woman's Club of Raleigh, 685-1889, www.jwcraleigh.org.
- Kids Revolving Closets, 570-9568, www.kidsrevolvingclosets.com.
- Kidz Junction, www.thekidzjunction.com.
- Nearly New Clothing Exchange, 821-7781, www.nearlynewclothingexchange.com.

- The Kids Exchange, www.kidsexchange.net. The next sale is July 16 through July 23 at the Jim Graham Building at the N.C. State Fairgrounds.
- Triangle Mothers of Twins & Triplets, www.tmott.org.
- Kids EveryWear (twice yearly consignment sale), Morrisville Outlet Mall, 1001 Airport Blvd., Morrisville, www.kidseverywear.com.