

Grandma Barker's. More than a children's resale store!

by George Moses

Grandma Barker's Kid's Resale is a unique shopping destination if you're looking for things for kids under 10. It's consignment, so it's a great way for you to clean out your closet, make a little money and help people out.

"We all know that it's silly to buy toys new," says store owner, Teri Best. "They grow out of them so fast!" So, you will find an abundance of gently used toys for sale in her store.

Grandma Barker's just moved into their new location across from the park in downtown Pinckney in April, but the store has been open for 2 1/2 years. "Location is key to let people know that I'm here. I have a very local business base; Gregory, Dexter, Pinckney, Hamburg, and I like that small town feel. I run the business with that mom and pop environment." Best added.

She knows her customers as friends. "I can ask them questions about their life because we talk and listen. I have kids that, when they drive by, insist that they stop to play, because I allow the kids to play with the toys.

"I have some kids that I see the same day every week. They come in to play with the toys. Ideally, I'm here for sales, but it's also a nice place for parents or grandparents. They can shop while the kids play. It's a bonus! You go in a store and you can't play with something that's in a box. Here, the kids are welcome to play with them."

There's a lot of brand new merchandise at Grandma Barker's.



Abundance of kids' apparel, toys, dolls, games & books

At baby showers you get more than one of the same thing. Or the baby's too big, and all those 0 to 3s they get won't fit. So many of these new items end up at Grandma Barker's. "This is a great place to come for shower gifts. If you came in and needed a baby gift, it's right there! On that little table! Done!" Best exclaimed.

Philanthropically, Best does a lot to help out people that need it. "After we've tried to sell them, I do have a lot of different venues for donations. I work a lot with foster families. Our summer clothes go to Haiti. We have a lot of church closets that, after so many days, clothes will go to. I've got three sources that take them for me. A church. A hospital. A girl that's putting a hospital together in Haiti. This is strictly for clothes that were intended to be sold, but didn't.



Teri Best, Owner, Grandma Barker's

"We always have sales once things are here for a long time. And it's clean. It's quality. And you don't have to drive around garage sale to garage sale to find things you want."

Best tries to have a good selection of multi-sensory toys. That just means that they do more than one thing. Like they will stimulate the sound, the visual, the cognitive. For instance, a toy that is brightly colored, makes noise and plays music.

Grandma Barker's is a shopping destination and a friendly environment. When you go there, you can spend a lot of time talking, as small town people do. They are very community aware. And they have quality merchandise. A lot of it!

What originally put this place in motion was Teri Best's Kindermusik business. "I've been a Kindermusik teacher for 5 years. The store was just an idea to diversify and provide more services in a

small town," says Best.

The Kindermusik is music and motion classes for infants to 4 year olds. She holds the classes in a separate room, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday mornings. Enrollments are anytime throughout the year. Kindermusik is mostly motion to music. So when you're bouncing a baby, you're teaching rhythm, or tempo. When you're swinging a baby, you're teaching equilibrium, balance, and the swing is also to the tempo and the beat. So you're teaching through movement.

"You can see from the start of the 10 weeks to the end of the 10 weeks that they realize that this is their class. They go from just being an observer to a participating person. It's really quite fun to watch the developmental change. It's a good social time for both the babies and moms or dads, and some grandmas," says Best.

Next, she is opening the back room to be a birthday party place for kids up to age 8. There will be craft classes and birthday parties, field trips, and The American Girl Doll Historical Society. Older girls can learn about the historical times of each doll. American Girl Dolls come in different eras. There's Revolutionary War, Civil War, Depression, World War II, and 20th century. And their stories are all about those times. So the classes will be about learning what the kids did then. What they ate. What they did for traditional holidays. Girls can learn how to make quilt patches, needlepoint, like they did during the Depression.

Another new addition is Noah's Ark, where you can build your own stuffed animal. They can stuff their own Teddy bear or their own dinosaur.

The story is all about diversification in downtown Pinckney. It's all about kids. And it's all about programs for kids. But it's a destination that you can go and do it all at once. You don't have to go into the city. You can have a birthday party. Your kids can have activities here. Your kids can have music classes here. And Grandma Barker's has the clothes and toys. Everything is right here!

Grandma Barker's is open Tuesday through Thursday 11 to 5:30 and Friday and Saturday 11 to 3. The store is closed Sunday and Monday.

Grandma Barker's
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