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At 10 months old, Abby Whetstone's baby already has outgrown many drawers full of clothes.

Likewise, Emily Kelly has plenty of clothes, toys and accessories too small for her 1- and 2-year-old children.

So the two mothers, a pair of identical twins, decided to sell all the extra clothes — and some of their friends' leftovers, too. They collected all the baby items and opened Twice As Nice Kids, a children's resale store in Arvada.

The store buys and sells minimally used clothes, toys, accessories, gear and furniture for babies, toddlers and elementary-school children.

"Kids grow so fast at the smallest ages," Whetstone said. "The useful life of clothes ... their kid fits in it for three months."

They opened the store in November, filling 30 percent of the store with their own items and starting credit accounts for their friends and other moms.

The store's stock and the customer base steadily has grown since. Parents get excited about the chance to buy barely used clothes for significantly less than new retail prices.

"Especially as the economy has been a little more pinched, and people are kind of tightening their expenses," Whetstone said. "... People appreciate the value resale clothes can bring for kids who aren't brand-conscious yet."

The store is a family affair with capital investment coming from Kelly's father-in-law, retail help from other relatives and Web site development by Kelly and Whetstone's brother.

Kelly left a job at the downtown aquarium to run the business. Whetstone occasionally works in the store between shifts at Qdoba.

All the employees are mothers or grandmothers. The office in the back of the store has a playpen and toys so they can bring the tots in tow.

Clerk Mary Hunt knew as soon as the store opened she was a good fit. In nearly two months at the store, Hunt has only gone home once without buying something for the grandchildren. Many customers also bring their



Photo by JUSTIN SAGARSEE  
Emily Kelly, left, and her twin sister Abby Whetstone are co-owners of Twice As Nice in Arvada. The sisters opened the store two months ago and offer a wide variety of kids' clothing, toys, gear, and furniture.

children along, which the employees welcome.

The store has plenty of toys for sale scattered throughout the store, and a television in the corner is always playing kids' movies.

A similar store recently closed in Wheat Ridge, but no other child-focused resale stores are open in the west suburbs, Whetstone said.

Roughly 20 percent of the store's stock is new. Kelly, Whetstone and employee Michele Green knitted dozens of baby blankets before the store opened, but they have sold most of them. Parents also bring in new clothes their children outgrew before they even removed the tags.

The store won't accept stuffed animals, mattresses or any items with broken parts or questionable safety ratings. Staffers check all car seats, strollers and other items against federal recall lists.

Whetstone said the post-holiday weeks have been as busy as the holiday season. Many parents have been in the store since Christmas, selling clothes and toys that were replaced by Santa Claus.

Although the recent snowstorms forced the store to close for several key shopping days, the store also benefited from the chilly weather, Whetstone said. Many tourists and area residents came in for snow pants and warm clothes.

Whetstone and Kelly also expect other times of year, such as seasonal shifts and students returning to school, to generate more revenue than the holidays.

In the future, the sisters hope to develop their own clothing line that includes tiny clothes for premature babies. That is hard to find, Whetstone said.

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