

## TOY RENTAL SERVICE



WORK & LIFESTYLE

Every parent of young children has an unwanted-toy graveyard somewhere in the home. Today's prized playthings inevitably become tomorrow's cast-offs, ready to be given away, discarded or boxed up in the garage. The alternative, offered by Texas start-up [Babyplays](#), is to receive four to six toys by mail each month. Parents can keep the toys as long as they like, and send them back to receive a fresh batch. Monthly subscription rates range from USD 36.99 to 64.99. Babyplays offers a range of age-appropriate toys, and depending on their membership level, parents can rent up to 10 toys a month. Besides reducing clutter, members can save money by renting instead of owning. You could call it the Netflix rental model applied to toys. We've seen start-ups tweak the rent-not-buy concept in innovative ways: in August 2007, we wrote about a German company, [Lütte-Leihen](#), that sends parents a fresh batch of baby clothes that can be exchanged for new ones each month. The same model has been applied to women's accessories, with companies like [Bag, Borrow or Steal](#) offering members access to designer handbags and jewellery. A factor all of these firms must reckon with is the need to acquire an adequate inventory of items to accommodate customer whims—a potentially expensive proposition. That said, the rental model still has plenty of new potential applications. What's key is that many consumers are becoming less interested in full ownership, opting instead for the convenience and flexibility of renting or fractional ownership. For many more examples, check out our sister-site [trendwatching.com](#)'s briefing about [transumers](#). Spotted by: Bill McMahon

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