

BBB: Holidays are here, and so are toy scams

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Milwaukee, Wis. – Every year, there’s always a few “must-have” toys on most kids’ holiday wish lists. The toy sells out fast and becomes expensive and hard to find. On top of that, the [microchip shortage](#) has parents worried about getting their deliveries on time. This year’s hot picks, [according to Amazon](#) (a BBB Accredited Business), include Galactic Snackin’ Grogu Animatronic (aka Baby Yoda); game consoles, such as Nintendo Switch and Playstation; LEGO; and L.O.L. Surprise dolls. Scammers are using the toys’ popularity to trick parents out of their money. **How the Scam Works**

You are looking for these toys, but they are sold out at every store you visit. So you decide to look online. A quick search takes you to a page that miraculously has the toy in stock. The site may look professional and have original images of the product. It may even offer the product at discounted prices, claiming a “last-minute deal” or “flash sale.”

Unfortunately, many such offers are fake. In many cases reported to [BBB.org/ScamTracker](#), buyers thought they were ordering a high-quality, animatronic toy. Instead, they received a cheap counterfeit version. In other cases, the products never shipped at all and the websites vanished. In either case, when the dissatisfied customers tried to follow up with the company, they found that the staff either didn’t respond or refused to provide a refund.

For example, one shopper told [BBB Scam Tracker](#) that they fell for a phony deal on gaming consoles: “I was online searching for an in-stock Nintendo Switch OLED. The Nintendo site did not have any in stock. I searched on Google for Nintendo switch OLED and found this site [redacted] for \$99.99. I thought wow that is cheap, and let’s go for it! I also bought a PlayStation 5 for the same price with a different email (since only one promotional item per email). They emailed me a confirmation and it

said to wait 24 to 48 hours for shipping information. I go to check today on order status and they took their website down. I tried emailing them and the email just returns back to me undeliverable.”

Another shopper found what they thought was a great deal on LEGO, but the product never shipped. “The product NEVER arrived, even though [redacted] gave me the run-around for 3 months saying it was on the way,” the consumer told [BBB Scam Tracker](#). “I checked the tracking number they gave me with the USPS, and they didn’t have anything with that number ever. It was a fake to begin with.”

Tips to avoid toy scams

- **Only buy toys from reputable stores and websites.** The best way to avoid getting scammed when purchasing toys is to buy them directly from a seller you know and trust.
- **Don’t be fooled by extra-low prices.** Unreasonably low prices are a red flag for a scam on many products. Avoid making a purchase from a retailer you aren’t familiar with just because the price sounds too good to be true – it probably is!
- **Research before you buy.** If a company seems legitimate but you aren’t familiar with it, be extra careful with your personal information. Before offering up your name, address, and credit card information, make sure the company has a working customer service number.

For More Information

See [BBB.org/onlineshopping](https://www.bbb.org/onlineshopping) for more online shopping tips. For more about avoiding scams this holiday season, check out [BBB.org/Holiday](https://www.bbb.org/Holiday).

If you’ve spot a scam (whether or not you’ve lost money), report it to [BBB Scam Tracker](#). Your report can help others avoid falling victim.

If you see a questionable ad, report it to [BBB AdTruth](https://www.bbb.org/AdTruth) so we can investigate.

For more information or further inquiries, contact the Wisconsin BBB at www.bbb.org/wisconsin, 414-847-6000 or 1-800-273-1002. Consumers also can find more information about how to protect themselves from scams by following the Wisconsin BBB on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).

ABOUT BBB: For more than 100 years, the Better Business Bureau has been helping people find businesses, brands and charities they can trust. In 2020, people turned to BBB more than 220 million times for BBB Business Profiles on 6.2 million businesses and Charity Reports on 11,000 charities, all available for free at [BBB.org](https://www.bbb.org). There are local, independent BBBs across the United States, Canada and Mexico, including BBB Serving Wisconsin which was founded in 1939 and serves the state of Wisconsin.