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Toys Of Child Strong Asset To Character

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NEW YORK (UPI) — Your

child's toys are a formidable asset to character development.

Harvey E. Rath, who once directed the activities of 80 FBI agents in New York, said so during an interview. He maintains that good toys certainly can help make better children.

"Next to his parents, a child's closest companions are his toys", Rath said. "This relationship continues from early childhood into his teens and increases in importance as the child grows older.

Free Time Important

The ex-crimefighter, now vice-president of the A.C. Gilbert Co., said that lack of interest in a child's free time is an invitation to delinquency.

"Parents," he said, "should exercise considerable care in the choice of a child's toys to help fill this time, just as they would in the selection of his friends.

"The basic ingredient of a toy is fun. But the interested parent should also ask — what will it teach my child?

"What it does teach should contribute constructively in some way to the youngster's physical or mental development."

Rath said these are the criteria his firm use in considering new toys.

He cited "erector" sets as an example of a teaching toy. The toy comes in ten different sizes.

Surveys have shown that hundreds of engineers first became enthralled with construction by playing with the sets as youngsters.

Toys Helpful

"But even if a toy doesn't lead a youngster directly to a profession, it can teach him responsibility, dexterity, logical thinking in using it, and aid in developing other traits that will help him grow into a worthwhile member of the community," Rath said.

He cited as an example a new stock car race toy involving a figure - eight roadway with an overpass and two models of popular American stock cars controlled by push buttons.

"On the surface, this game might appear to encourage speed in driving," he said. "Actually, a youngster quickly discovers that excessive speed will make his car skid off the road on the turns — and he loses the race.

"By the time he's old enough to get behind the wheel of a real car, he will know the dangers of speed.