

WHY DOESN'T THE CITY PUT UP "CHILDREN AT PLAY" SIGNS?

An often-heard neighborhood request concerns the posting of generalized warning signs with "SLOW-CHILDREN AT PLAY" or other similar messages. Parental concern for the safety of children in the street near home, and a misplaced but widespread public faith in traffic signs to provide protection often prompt these requests.

Although some other communities have posted such signs widely in residential areas, no factual evidence has been presented to document their success in reducing pedestrian accidents, operating speeds or legal liability. Studies have shown that many types of signs attempting to warn of normal conditions in residential areas have failed to achieve desired safety benefits. Unnecessary signs confuse and annoy drivers. Since nearly every residential block has children living on it, there would have to be signs on each one. Blocks with no such signs might imply that no children live there, so it is okay to speed.

Because of these serious considerations, the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, which has been adopted as the Federal Standard, discourages use of "CHILDREN AT PLAY" signs. The City of Hutchinson and the State of Kansas have also adopted the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices. The signs are not enforceable and impose no legal requirements on motorists.

Children Playing signs can give parents a false sense of security, and children could also misinterpret the signs to mean it is acceptable to play in the street. Children should not be encouraged to play within the street travelways. The sign has long been rejected since it is a direct and open suggestion that this behavior is acceptable.

