

Slow Children at Play Signs

Legend

Signs

MUTCCode

- WHUD1 - 84 Signs

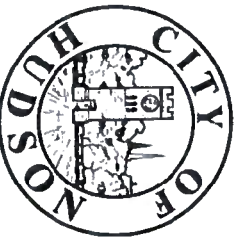
— Streets

— Railroads

▭ Hudson Boundary



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City of Hudson, Ohio
 Department of Community Development
 GIS Division

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Slow Children At Play

Slow children at play is a common sign seen in American cities urging motorists to slow down.^[1] The signs are seen around areas where children frequent, such as playgrounds and schools. They are almost always characterized by the words "*Slow Children At Play*" and a picture of a child running. They sometimes have a speed limit posted on them.

Sometimes neighborhood residents post impromptu signs after a child is struck by a vehicle.^[2] The signs quite often provide fodder for humor at the expense of slow (mentally handicapped) children. Some municipalities will not post "Children at Play" signs. The website of Montgomery County, Maryland Department of Transportation states:

"Children at Play" signs are not approved for use by the "Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices", the national standard for traffic control signs. The generic message of these signs does not command sufficient motorists attention since motorists are generally aware of the increased possibility of children playing in adjacent yards and sidewalks when they are driving on any residential street.

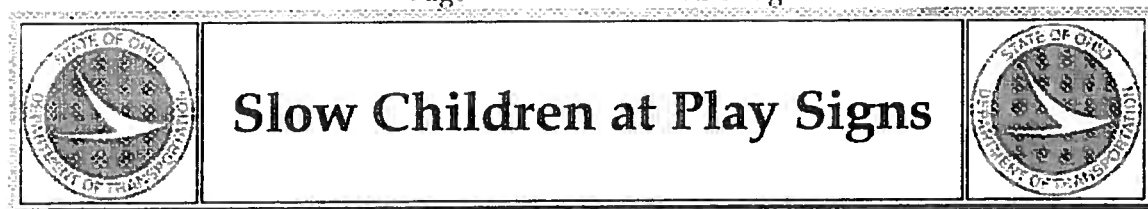
"Children at Play" signs are inappropriate for public streets since they convey the suggestion that playing on the street is acceptable behavior, which it is not. Additionally, the installation of this sign may lead parents and children to believe they have an added degree of protection which these sign do not provide.^[3]



Some "slow children at play" signs just say "Slow"

References

1. ^ City of San Antonio – Installation of Non-Standard Signs (<http://www.sanantonio.gov/publicworks/trafeng/childrenatplay.asp?res=1280&ver=true>). Sanantonio.gov. Retrieved on 2010-12-27.
2. ^ Williams, Brooke. (2004-08-08) Neighborhood grieves for boy killed by truck | The San Diego Union-Tribune (http://www.signonsandiego.com/uniontrib/20040808/news_1m8sammy.html). Signonsandiego.com. Retrieved on 2010-12-27.
3. ^ MCDOT- Traffic Engineering and Operations (<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/trstmpl.asp?url=/content/dot/traffic/faq.asp>). Montgomerycountymd.gov (2010-06-15). Retrieved on 2010-12-27.

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These signs are not used by Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) on the rural state highway system and ODOT discourages others from using them. It should also be noted that the rectangular children at play signs that are often seen are a nonstandard shape for a warning sign. Warning signs should be diamond-shaped. It should be noted that if there is a "designated children's play area" the Ohio Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices does have a "playground sign."

The following is from the Traffic Engineering Manual of the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT). It discusses ODOT's position on the use of signs with wording such as children at play, slow children or watch for children.

Signs intended to alert drivers that children may be present in an area, such as CHILDREN AT PLAY or WATCH FOR CHILDREN, have not been shown to have a discernable benefit to traffic safety but still remain popular with the public. No factual evidence has been presented to document the success of this type of signing 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, or conditions that are not always present, have failed to achieve the desired safety benefits.

Children should not be encouraged to play in the roadway. If signs encourage parents and children to believe they have an added degree of protection, which the signs do not and cannot provide, this can result in a disservice. This type of signing has long been rejected since it is a direct and open suggestion that this behavior is acceptable.

For these reasons, ODOT does not provide CHILDREN AT PLAY or similar signing. This type of signing is not recommended for use on any roadway at any time.

Links

[ODOT District One Planning Traffic Studies Page](#)

[Children at Play Signs - Seldom Effective, and Usually Unnecessary and Confusing - from the University of New Hampshire Technology Transfer Center](#)