

CHILDREN AT PLAY SIGNS

Why doesn't the City put up "Children at Play" signs?

The City of O'Fallon often receives requests for the posting of generalized warning signs that read "Slow – Children at Play" or similar messages. This is due to the understandable parental concern for the safety and protection of their children and an often misplaced public faith in traffic signals providing that protection.

The City of O'Fallon's ordinance requires the City to follow the Missouri Department of Transportation's (MoDOT) rules and regulations regarding traffic control devices. MoDOT has adopted the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), which has also been adopted as the Federal Standard and discourages the use of "Children at Play" signs. The signs are not enforceable and impose no legal requirements on motorists.

An alternative option available would be to obtain a 'Keep Kids Alive, Drive 25' yard sign. These signs serve as a dual purpose because they are enforceable showing the speed limit, while reminding the driver what may result from speeding. To purchase these signs, please contact Conan Stott at 636.379.5550 or via email at cstott@ofallon.mo.us. The City will install the signs once they are delivered.

"Children at Play" signs can give parents a false sense of their child's security and the children may misinterpret the signs to mean playing in the street is acceptable. Children should not be encouraged to play on vehicle traveled roadways. These types of signs have been rejected because they suggest this behavior is acceptable.

Although 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. Since nearly every residential block has children living on it, the City could be required to install these signs on each street when requested. Studies have shown that signs which attempt to warn of conditions that are ordinary in residential areas have failed to achieve their desired safety benefits.