

The City of River Falls often receives requests to install signs warning drivers of the possible presence of "Children at Play." These signs are deceiving and are ineffective. Drivers should expect the presence of children in residential areas. Studies show that devices attempting to warn motorists of normal conditions or conditions that are not always present do not achieve the desired safety benefits.

Some cities have posted "Children at Play" signs in residential areas despite studies showing that generalized signs warning of normal conditions such as children in a residential area fail to achieve the desired safety benefits.

"CHILDREN AT PLAY" signs may give parents and children a false sense of security as the sign is assumed to provide protection, which in reality it does not. Due to these serious considerations, federal standards no longer include "CHILDREN AT PLAY" signs. Special conditions such as warnings of school zones, playgrounds, parks and other recreational facilities, do warrant signing, as these are not easily anticipated by drivers.

Q: Are "Children at Play" signs effective?

A: "Children at Play" signs tend to create a false sense of security for parents and children who believe the signs provide added protection when motorists, particularly local ones, actually pay little attention to them. The use of "Children at Play" and similar signs are not a recognized traffic control device by the State of Wisconsin. The signs are a direct and open suggestion to small children that playing in or beside the roadway is safe.

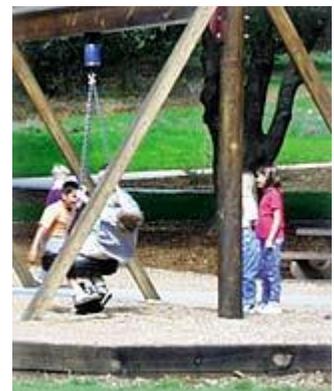
Q: How do I get speed limits lowered for children playing in the streets?

A: Concerned citizens often request lower speed limits on residential streets where children are playing. The statutory speed limit on most residential streets is 25 MPH. The State of Wisconsin does not allow for speed limits below 25 MPH except in school zones. Read more regarding speed limits later on this page.

Q: How can I make my neighborhood a safe place for children to play?

A: Signs that are not necessary confuse drivers and encourage disrespect for all signs. However, signs should be posted, for school zones, pedestrian crossings, playgrounds, and other recreational areas, where a need exists.

Most importantly, parents should never allow their children to play in the street. Neighborhood parks are available in many residential areas where children can play safely with proper supervision.



Q: What is the City's policy on "Children at Play" signs?

A: The City does not install "Children at Play" or similar signs, "Slow" or "Slow - Entering Residential Area," for the following reasons:

1. These types of signs are not recognized by the State or Federal Highway Administration as official traffic control devices.
2. Placing these signs would suggest that the City allows children to play in the street. The City is unable to assume this responsibility due to the obvious liability associated with it.