



## Traffic Guidelines Manual

ORIGINATOR State Traffic Engineer	2-3-60
CHAPTER 2	Signing
SECTION 3	Warning Signs
SUBJECT 60	Children At Play Signs

### A. General

[Section 2C.03](#) of the 2009 MUTCD allows for the development of customized word messages on warning signs. These customized word messages *may* be developed to fulfill signing needs based on engineering study or engineering judgment. However, [Section 2C.02](#) of the 2009 MUTCD states that the usage of warning signs *should* be kept to a minimum, as the unnecessary use of warning signs tends to breed disrespect for all signs. The over usage of signs *may* result in information overload for the motorist, which can impact safety.

### B. Background

Periodically, the Department receives requests to install the following types of Child Crossing Signs:

Children at Play  
Watch For Children  
Slow Children

Usage of these types of signs has been discouraged by the Federal Highway Administration, Institute of Transportation Engineers, and many other States and Local Units of government for the following reasons:

1. Signs lose credibility with motorists when they appear too often.
2. Warning signs are most effective when they warn of consistent, not occasional conditions. Children are not likely to be consistently playing at a particular location in the street at all times (unlike at playgrounds or parks). As a result, the signs mentioned above could lose their effectiveness.
3. These signs provide parents and children with a false sense of security that their children are safe when playing in or near the street.

4. Some before and after studies have indicated no reductions in vehicle speeds or crashes with the signs present.
5. Because these signs are typically warning signs, they are not enforceable.
6. In lieu of signing, more effective countermeasures *may* be to employed to increase motorist visibility on the roadway. Some of these countermeasures could include:
  - a. Restricting parking or trimming vegetation to increase sight distance.
  - b. Education and awareness efforts.
  - c. Installation of traffic calming devices for urban low-speed areas.

### C. Policy for Child Crossing Signing

1. No new Child Crossing Signs **shall** be installed on State Highways.
2. Existing Child Crossing Signs on State Highways *may* be allowed to remain until the end of their useful life. Other opportunities such as knockdown damage, improvement projects or change in conditions *may* make it possible to have the signs removed earlier.