



Traffic Operations



Question/Request: CHILDREN AT PLAY SIGNS

The Traffic Operations Department frequently receives requests from parents and homeowners associations for "CHILDREN AT PLAY" signs in residential areas. These requests stem from concerns for the safety of their children in the street and near their homes. Unfortunately, these requests are based on a false belief that these signs actually provide protection. Citizens fail to realize that these signs are deceiving and ineffective.

For this reason, the City of Fort Collins Traffic Operations Department will not install, or allow to be installed, Children at Play signs. These signs have not been shown to increase driver awareness and are not recognized as a standard highway sign by the Federal Highway Administration. Studies have shown no evidence that these signs prevent pedestrian accidents or decrease the vehicle speeds. Children at play signs also give parents and children a false sense of security and can be misinterpreted to mean that it's okay to play in the street. It is important that parents teach their children about the dangers of playing near or in the street and should discourage them from doing so.

Another consideration with these signs is that nearly every street has children on it and would be require a sign to be posted on every block. This is not only impractical but would render the signs meaningless. Streets with no signs might also imply that no children live there and could lead to unsafe driving on those particular streets. Warning signs are effective tools if used sparingly to warn motorists of **uncommon** hazards that are not apparent to drivers. The use of unnecessary signs generally promotes a disrespect for all signs. To address pedestrian safety, specific warning signs for school zones, pedestrian crossings, playgrounds and other recreational areas are used where they are truly warranted.

The City of Fort Collins Traffic Operations Department does provide "Slow Down in our Neighborhood" yard signs that can be obtained from the Traffic Operations Department. These are for residents to place in their yard as a reminder to drivers. Yard signs are free of charge and can be picked up at the Traffic Operations Department Facility at 626 Linden Street on Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.