

CHILDREN AT PLAY

Safety Factors Relating to Children at Play

The City of Lewisville often receives requests to install signs warning drivers of the possible presence of children at play. However, these signs are deceiving and ineffective.

Drivers already expect the presence of children in residential areas, especially at certain times, and studies show that devices attempting to warn motorists of normal conditions, or conditions that are not always present, fail to achieve the desired safety benefits.



False Sense of Security

“Children at Play” signs can create a false sense of security for residents who believe the signs provide protection when motorists actually pay little attention to them. The use of “Children at Play” and similar signs, such as “Slow” or “Slow - Entering Residential Area,” has long been discouraged since these signs can be a suggestion to children that sitting or lying down in the roadway is acceptable.

Another myth is that such signs help reduce speeds. There is no evidence that these signs prevent accidents or reduce the speed of vehicles. If problems with speeding exist, assistance should be sought from law enforcement authorities.

Signs Used to Warn of Pedestrians in the Roadway

The MUTCD (Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices) is the national standard for all traffic control devices. The MUTCD specifies these two signs to warn of the presence of pedestrians in a marked crosswalk in the roadway. The difference in these signs is the pentagon sign is used at marked crosswalks in school areas.



The MUTCD also calls for warning signs in park areas with large concentrations of children.

The City of Lewisville installs a warning sign to alert drivers where deaf children live because these children cannot hear an approaching car.



City Policy on Children at Play Signs

The City of Lewisville is very concerned about child safety. If “Children at Play” signs were effective, these traffic control devices would be installed on every residential street. However, this would lead to an abundance of signs that drivers would ignore without achieving the desired safety benefit. Moreover, drivers would ignore signs specified by the MUTCD to warn of pedestrians in crosswalks, parks, and deaf child areas.



Lower Speed Limits

Texas law states that the unposted speed limit on a residential street is 30 mph and this limit can be enforced without signs. The City has posted 25 mph limits on all residential streets, 5 mph below the state limit, to enhance child safety and promote traffic calming. The City cannot post lower speed limits in areas other than school zones because the posting of such signs by a local government agency is considered a speed trap and oppressive.

Addressing the Safety of Children

Parents must teach children the dangers of playing in or near roadways and discourage them from doing so. The City provides neighborhood parks where children can play safely with proper supervision. Safe playgrounds are also provided at many elementary schools. We take our role in solving traffic problems seriously, yet the ultimate burden of safety rests on the citizens of Lewisville.

If you have questions or concerns regarding traffic, please call the City Traffic Engineering section at 972.219.3703.

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