



Information on CHILDREN AT PLAY signs



How can I get a CHILDREN AT PLAY sign on my street? Can I install one myself?

Safety Factors Relating to CHILDREN AT PLAY

Beaufort County often receives requests to install signs warning drivers of the possible presence of children at play on or near the street in residential areas. Concerned citizens fail to realize that these signs are deceiving and ineffective. Drivers should always 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 also tend to create a false sense of security for parents and children who believe the signs provide an added degree of protection when motorists, particularly local ones, actually pay little attention to them. The use of the CHILDREN AT PLAY and similar signs such as SLOW or SLOW – ENTERING RESIDENTIAL AREA has long been discouraged since these signs are direct and open suggestion to small children that playing in or beside the roadway is acceptable.

Parents also seem to believe such signs may help reduce speeds. There is no evidence that these signs prevent accidents or reduce the speed of vehicles. If problems with speeding exist, this should be brought to the attention of the Beaufort County Sheriff’s Department at (843) 255-3200 who is responsible for vehicle code enforcement in the unincorporated areas of Beaufort County.

County Policy on CHILDREN AT PLAY signs

CHILDREN AT PLAY and similar signs are not recognized by the State of South Carolina or the Federal Highway Administration as official traffic control devices and, therefore, are not installed by the County on public streets.

Addressing the Safety of Young Children

Unnecessary signs confuse and annoy drivers and foster disrespect for all signs, but signs in accordance with the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)* are posted for school zones and pedestrian crossings where a need exists. More importantly, parents should teach children the dangers of playing in or near roadways and strongly discourage them from doing so. **Neighborhood parks are provided throughout the County where children can play safely with proper supervision. Safe playgrounds are also provided at nearby schools.**

Lower Speed Limits

Citizens frequently request lower speed limits on residential streets where children are playing. If the County posted such residential streets with arbitrarily lower speed limits, it is likely that the courts would consider that a “speed trap”, and in accordance with state law, any citations issued may be invalid. Citizens may request the County to review the speed limit for a County roadway. Based on a completed study, the County may raise or lower a speed limit. Unless severely constrained, the County will not post a speed limit below 25 mph on a County road.

Signs on Private Property

The MUTCD prohibits private citizens from posting, erecting, installing, or maintaining any sign or device that resembles, imitates, or purports a traffic control device on or for a public roadway. Government agencies may remove such devices without notice.

Want More Information?

This flyer is for general purposes only. For more information, please contact the Beaufort County Traffic & Transportation Engineering Department at (843) 255-2940 or [click here](#)

NOTE: The MUTCD is used throughout the country as the standard by which traffic control decisions are made. The complete MUTCD can be found at: http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/pdfs/2009r1r2/pdf_index.htm