

Children at Play Signs

As described in Section 2C.02 of the *MUTCD*, the purpose of warning signs is to inform drivers of a condition they are likely to encounter consistently. The use of Playground signs (W15-1) alerts drivers to locations where children can be expected. This sign should be used only in advance of a location adjacent to the roadway designated for children's play, creating the potential for a high concentration of children.



W15-1

Warning signs should be uniformly designed and used; generally, symbol message signs are recommended. Children at Play and variations such as Slow—Children, Watch Children, and Caution—Children signs are not consistent and may confuse drivers. The *MUTCD* does not recommend the use of these nonuniform signs.

Special warning signs, such as those described, or similar warnings, such as Deaf Child, intend to warn drivers and reduce vehicle speeds. However, many studies have shown that vehicle speeds are primarily determined by roadway conditions and environment, not signing.

Overuse of these signs or placement in non-warranted situations may cause drivers to ignore the intended message. More positive means of speed control in neighborhoods may be accomplished with traffic calming measures described in the article “Traffic Calming Measures” (G9) in this manual.

Some jurisdictions have developed guidelines for the installation of special warning signs, such as the Deaf Child sign. These guidelines usually require medical certification of hearing loss and include a maximum age stipulation—perhaps 10 to 12 years of age—assuming that this signing will no longer be necessary once the child reaches that age. This stipulation also assures that signing will be removed once the need has passed. These guidelines also generally restrict the use of Deaf Child signs to non-access restricted roadways.

More pertinent information on this topic can be found in the appendix.