

*Children at Play continued*

The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) is a federal manual that has been adopted by the State of Connecticut as law. The intent of the manual is to give roadway agencies a set of standards to help make roads safer. It is the source for when and where a sign should be installed and which sign it should be. The MUTCD does not include "CHILDREN AT PLAY" signs or any variation. But why is this? There are many reasons that "CHILDREN AT PLAY" signs are not recommended. These are just a few.

- They are typically designed to look like warning signs, diamond shaped and yellow with a black legend. Other warning signs provide information on the specific location of the hazard (pedestrian crossing, curve, etc.). "CHILDREN AT PLAY" signs do not give a specific location. They merely tell the driver that kids may be in the road somewhere.
- If you install "CHILDREN AT PLAY" signs in some neighborhoods and not others, drivers may be led to believe that there are no children in the areas with out signs, making them more vulnerable.

- "CHILDREN AT PLAY" signs give parents a feeling of security in letting their children play in the roads. In fact, no level of signage could ever protect a child should they be hit by a car.
- Studies have shown that "CHILDREN AT PLAY" signs do not reduce traffic speeds or make drivers more observant.

Additionally, nearly 30 percent of tort cases filed against roadway agencies pertain to signs. When you install signs not in conformance with the MUTCD, you are increasing your agency's liability should a child be hit on your roadways.

There are some alternatives that can work in many instances. The playground sign is an appropriate sign alongside parks where children may often visit. Also the pedestrian crossing sign should be used in those locations where children and others frequently cross the road to warn motorists.

It isn't always easy to say no to residents of your community, but by not erecting "CHILDREN AT PLAY" signs, you may actually be making the community safer for everyone.

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Fax: (860) 486-2399

Web: [www.t2center.uconn.edu](http://www.t2center.uconn.edu)

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**Donna Shea**  
PROGRAM DIRECTOR  
[shea@enr.uconn.edu](mailto:shea@enr.uconn.edu)

**Mary McCarthy**  
TRAINING SPECIALIST  
[mary@enr.uconn.edu](mailto:mary@enr.uconn.edu)

**Shelly Desjardin**  
PROGRAM ASSISTANT  
[shelly@enr.uconn.edu](mailto:shelly@enr.uconn.edu)

**Christopher LaRosa**  
GRAPHIC DESIGN

