



Slow – Children Playing Signs

The State of Illinois and the United States Department of Transportation have adopted a document called the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Street and Highways. It is used by all levels of government as a guideline for the installation of traffic signs and pavement markings. The purpose of the Manual is to enhance traffic safety by making the design and use of traffic control devices uniform throughout the country. As a result, a motorist from Illinois should be able to travel to any other state and understand the traffic control devices encountered throughout the trip.

The installation of SLOW – CHILDREN PLAYING signs is not authorized by the Manual for several reasons:

1. **Enforceability**

There is no legal definition of the word “slow”. One person might consider thirty miles per hour to be “slow” while another feels that the sign means five miles per hour. Since there is no legal definition for the Police Department to use, the sign is not enforceable.

2. **Proliferation of Signs**

The traveling public is already subjected to a mind numbing array of roadside signs and distractions. The addition of more signs should be avoided whenever possible. Children play on and near every street in the residential portions of the city. If this type of sign was installed at all of these locations, the boulevards would be a forest of SLOW – CHILDREN PLAYING signs. Traffic engineering studies have proven that after a few trips down the same street, a motorist no longer notices this type of warning sign and the installations have no lasting impact on traffic speed or driver awareness.

3. **Danger to Children**

The installation of SLOW – CHILDREN PLAYING signs might encourage children or their parents to believe that it is safe for children to be playing in the street and nothing is farther from the truth. Since the signs have little or no real impact on the behavior of passing motorists, a dependence upon the sign could have tragic consequences.

The Traffic Engineering Committee shares your concern for the traffic safety, but we cannot support your request. SLOW – CHILDREN PLAYING signs do not make it safe for the children to play in the street. The burden of protecting the children from traffic must be shared by the adults who supervise them and the passing motorists.