

SIGNS

Signs are a key traffic playground learning element and turn the street network into a real operating system. They also make the space more fun and allow kids to feel more grown-up as they play and use the site. Traffic playground learning is primarily associated with intersection interactions and signs are a key part of clarifying how an intersection is controlled (i.e. supposed to work). Learning to recognize and read the signs themselves is a part of the educational process.

The following reduced-scale signs are typical of those used to complete a traffic playground:



Traffic signs can be permanently installed into the ground, portable on a base that can be moved, or applied permanently to the surface. Traffic signals are much less commonly found for practical reasons including cost and the need to power and maintain them. Sometimes retired traffic signals are donated by the local department of transportation who will then maintain their operation at the traffic playground. Although a popular and useful donation, such re-purposed signals can be over-scaled for the small sized streets. Other types of signs found at traffic playgrounds may include those with facility name, facility rules, sponsor recognition or roadway safety/biking instructions. Refer to [Table 6.7 Signs and Signals Criteria and Considerations](#) for further details about sign installation.

TABLE 6.7 SIGNS AND SIGNALS CRITERIA AND CONSIDERATIONS

Sizing can be selected based on street widths and age range of facility users as well as the site application.

Definitions:

- Sign head = face of the sign itself
- Sign post = vertical element supporting the sign head
- Sign base = weight attached to base of portable sign post

Traffic Sign Element	Criteria	Performance Considerations
In-ground installed signs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign head = 12" - 16" wide • Sign post = 36" - 48" high • Use standard design, style and colors for sign head • Consider full-height sign heads and posts where adults learners also use site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May need professional installation so that signs are anchored appropriately • Consider safety aspect when signs are fixed • Eliminates flexibility in moving signs around site
Portable signs and signals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign head = 8" - 12" wide • Sign post = 24" - 48" high • Sign base = 15 - 25 pounds • Use standard design, style and colors for sign head 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many commercial product choices available at range of price points and quality • Sign may fall over if insufficiently weighted • Heavier bases can be difficult to move around • May need on-site storage and handcart if portable signs cannot be left on street layout at all times • On-site storage creates need for arranging access and coordination
Surface-applied signs (painted or stenciled)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Size to fit available space next to roadway • Use stencils that follow standard sign head format • Use standard design, style and colors when representing signs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs can be stenciled on surface during striping installation • STOP and YIELD sign stencils can be custom-made as reduced-size versions of standard roadway signs • Ensure that stenciled sign does not conflict with pedestrian crossings

Traffic Sign Element	Criteria	Performance Considerations
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surface-applied signs eliminate safety or security issues • Surface-applied signs may be harder to see and follow • Less of a 'real-world' lesson
Combination of portable and surface-applied signs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See above criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May make it possible to have signs for public during off hours while portable signs are stored • On-site storage creates the need for arranging access and coordination • Creates a hybrid appearance
Homemade, handmade or handheld signs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Size and materials vary • Follow standard design, style and colors when representing signs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be readily created using available tools and materials or purchased at low cost • Not as effective during use • Creates need for storage and coordination • Usually less durable
In-ground installed signals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scaled-down traffic signal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced-size permanently installed signals • Possible safety issue as signals are fixed rigid and metal objects • Operating signals require power or battery packs