

# On Guard



## Frontline Leadership Safety Program



Helping each other grow in risk management as we progress through our career.

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The objective is simple, the goal is lofty; up your safety awareness, keep your child free from harm.

# Introduction

In 1997, Janine Benyus introduced us to “biomimicry;” looking to nature to solve engineering problems. This program looks to Nature to help us with how we think about safety. The objective is simple, the goal is lofty; up your safety awareness, keep your child free from harm.

Some definitions:

Harm = inflicted injury/damage

Hazard = danger; the cause of harm/injury

Risk = exposure to danger

Severity = how much damage the hazard can cause

Control = anything that limits exposure to danger

“Accident” is a concept that will not be used in this study of safety. True accidents are rare. “Accident” connotes being a victim of unplanned circumstances, bad luck or chance, whereby a person is relieved of any fault or responsibility. What people call “accidents” could be more correctly called “incidents,” and the results are always undesirable. *All incidents are caused by a controllable set of circumstances.* This means, keeping one’s body free from damage can be achieved by managing exposure to danger through the use of controls.

Is a good body important for a good life? How good a body do you need and for how long? For the animals, a good body is essential. Failure to be safe means they are dinner. While the animals have mastered strategies for staying safe, people seem comfortable “playing the odds” with safety. Being safety-alert is not just about following rules, it starts with a shift in thinking. Each section of this study follows the same format; picture, story, discussion, questions. A serious effort with the questions will create a shift in thinking. Learn the lessons taught by nature and improve the experience in life for you and those important to you.



If I walk through this grass without getting hurt, does it mean "I am safe..."



...or am I "lucky?"

# What is “safe?”

This is a grassland in the Savannah of Botswana. Looks pretty peaceful, doesn't it? If you walk across this area and survive is it because you were safe...or were you lucky? For you, is "safe" "not getting hurt" or is "safe" the result of definable steps taken to minimize your exposure to hazards?

1. Why should I care about being "safe?"
2. What is the main idea in the story?
3. Up until now, how have I been thinking about "safe?" Would new ideas be helpful?
4. What would be the impact if I adopted new ideas about "safe?"
5. What does the picture/story mean to me? What can I learn?
6. What must I stop doing?
7. What will I do differently? What could be counted or measured to help me change?



**Accountable Adults** stand watch over the nursery for the safety and well being of the chicks.



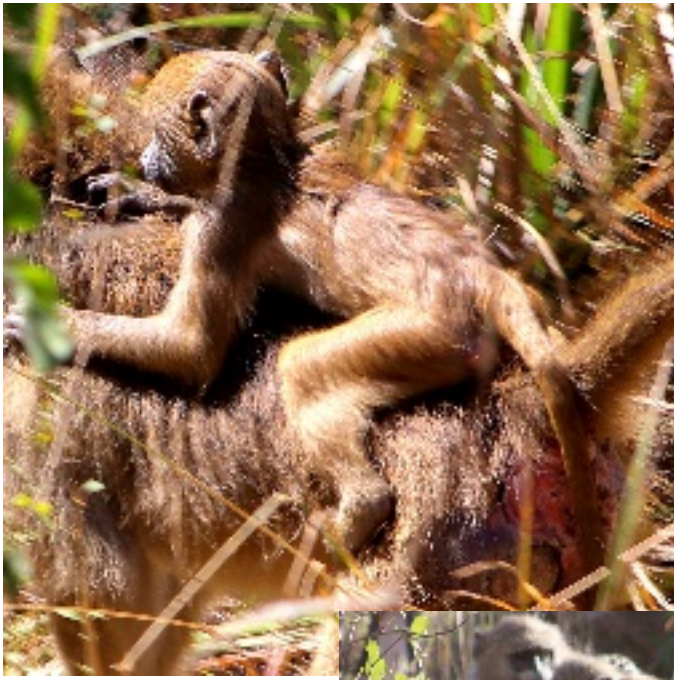
**Attentive Adults** guard the chicks in the crèche from predators.



# Accountable & Attentive

This is the Boulders Penguin Colony, located just up the beach from the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa. Pictured here is the nursery. The chicks are cradled in holes and guarded by adults to protect them from predators. Baby penguins have no understanding of what can hurt them; they are totally unaware. The adults are on guard to protect the little ones. They are attentive; they are ever watching. It is their job...it is their accountability to ensure the chicks stay safe.

1. Why should I care about accountability and attentiveness?
2. What is the main idea in the story?
3. Up until now, how have I been thinking about my accountability and attentiveness? Would new ideas be helpful?
4. What would be the impact if I adopted new ideas about my accountability and attentiveness?
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# Stages of Childhood Development

The journey from newborn to adult is a predictable process of growth. The journey is marked by key milestones of development, both physical and mental. As an adult with accountability for overseeing this journey, the requirement is to adjust safety strategies to meet each stage of development. The exposure to hazards increases with the passing of each developmental milestone and the need for attentiveness goes up. Pictured here are baboons. The baboon family faces the same challenges with childhood development. At first, the baby has no capability to recognize hazards; it is totally vulnerable. The parent's strategy is to keep the little one attached to their back. Then with age, a little more freedom to sit within the family unit, and then the ability to travel independently when the family moves. The parent stays ever vigilant for harm until the child matures and takes its place in the troop. Baboons adapt their safety strategy as the child develops. The first four years of childhood development for people is summarized below. Consider how safety strategies must change along with each phase of the child's growth.

## **1 year to 18 months**

Creeps up stairs, walks for 10-20 minutes, makes simple lines with crayons. Shows dependent behavior. Repeats a few words. Feeds self. Very upset when separated from mother, fear of bath. Obeys limited commands.

## **1.5 to 2 years**

Runs, kicks ball, builds with blocks. Vocabulary of over 200 words. Temper tantrums start. Resentment of new baby. Does opposite of what they are told.

## **2 to 3 Years**

Rides tricycle, uses crayons. Shows emotions on face. Fear of separation. Develops anger and humor. Enjoys other children. Negativism, resists demands, gives orders, insists on routine.



The path to maturity is a predictable process of growth.

### **3 to 4 Years**

Stands on one leg, jumps, draws simple shapes. Self-sufficient in many routines. Fears the dark and injury. Likes to share, cooperative play with other children.

1. Why should I care about childhood development?
2. What is the main idea in the story?
3. Up until now, how have I been thinking about childhood development? Would new ideas be helpful?
4. What would be the impact if I adopted new ideas about childhood development?
5. What does the picture/story mean to me? What can I learn?
6. What must I stop doing?
7. What will I do differently? What could be counted or measured to help me change?

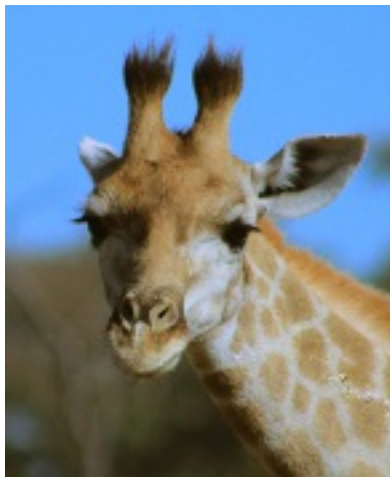
## Customize safety strategy to match personality



**Playful**  
or  
**Independent**



**Mischievous**



**Innocent**



Time to prepare!

# Preparing to Protect Your Child

Look at the lion cubs. Even at a very young age, differing personalities start to become apparent. Some are playful and stay close to the parent while others are self-assured and independent. The baby giraffe and elephant appear innocent and the baby hyenas, mischievous. What about your child?

- \* active or docile;
- \* carefree or cautious;
- \* distracted or focused;
- \* confident or hesitant;
- \* adventurous or careful;
- \* obedient or willful?

The level of hands-on involvement needs to match the nature of the child coupled with their stage of development. Types of hazards come in and out of scope based on each child, and require you to adapt your skills at scanning areas for relevant hazards. Remember, a hazard is a danger and exposure to the danger is a risk. Learn the most common hazards for four to eight year olds in the book, Love the Baby Animal Safe-ari.

1. Why should I care about preparation?
2. What is the main idea in the story?
3. Up until now, how have I been thinking about preparation? Would new ideas be helpful?
4. What would be the impact if I adopted new ideas about preparation?
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How much freedom does the child get to explore?



### Risk Matrix

Likelihood		Very Likely	Likely	Unlikely	Highly Unlikely
Consequences	Fatality	High	High	High	Medium
	Major Injuries	High	High	Medium	Medium
	Minor Injuries	High	Medium	Medium	Low
	Negligible Injuries	Medium	Medium	Low	Low

Severity vs. Exposure



# Assessing

Notice the distance between the adults and the baby baboon. With the brush so high hazards could be close by, but they seem comfortable letting the baby explore boundaries. And this becomes the challenge: help the child grow their capabilities while minimizing exposure to harm. To do this effectively, the skill of “assessing” must be developed. Refer to the example of a traditional “Risk Matrix.” It is designed to help compare situations based on Severity and Exposure; how much damage and how likely to contact the hazard. Understanding how the child behaves factors into the “likeliness to contact.” If the child has strong impulse control and can self-regulate, then concern over exposure can be reduced. If not, then “likeliness to contact” is elevated. The assessment is used to help develop controls. “Controls” can range from hands-on involvement, to helmets, to enrollment in a gym program. The goal is to create situations where the child can test their capabilities in a controlled environment. This is worthy work.

1. Why should I care about assessing?
2. What is the main idea in the story?
3. Up until now, how have I been thinking about assessing? Would new ideas be helpful?
4. What would be the impact if I adopted new ideas about assessing?
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# Learning

Just like children, leopard cubs like playing and they get totally absorbed in their activities. In their youthfulness, they are naïve to the hazards around them; their survival depends on the watchfulness of an adult. Is it possible for an adult to stay 100% focused, 100% of the time? The adult leopard has to be creative in finding ways to reduce the cubs' exposure to hazards because at some point the adult may get distracted. The challenge is to help the child learn about hazards and start owning some accountability for not getting hurt. "Teaching - learning - doing" all go together. The adult shares important lessons, the child pays attention and then models what to do. The young zebra shows this perfectly. So, for the leopard, they have learned the importance of trees for hunting, hiding and storing food. By teaching the cubs about trees, the parent starts to share safety responsibility. Up the tree the cubs go and everyone can nap safely. What lessons must be taught to keep your child safe? Remember, this can be done by encouraging safe, experiential learning.

1. Why should I care about encouraging learning?
2. What is the main idea in the story?
3. Up until now, how have I been thinking about encouraging learning? Would new ideas be helpful?
4. What would be the impact if I adopted new ideas about encouraging learning?
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Owning safety for self and community.

# Ownership

There comes a time when the baboon's job of getting the child to maturity is complete. On this day, the child is totally accountable for not-getting-hurt and takes its place in the troop. The process for transferring ownership for safety is based on the adult's assessment of how effective their teaching has been.

- \* Are the concepts of hazard, severity and control understood? Have examples been shared from the adult's life; the child's?
- \* Has the connection been made between a damage-free body and day-to-day well being? Is there awareness that a healthy body is important to an active life style, immunity, mood, mental alertness, reduced long-term disease?
- \* Has there been discussion about the reasons people risk the vessel (body) that holds their life?
- \* Has thoughtfulness been given to everything done in front of the child so that they see what safe behavior looks like?

1. Why should I care about ownership?
2. What is the main idea in the story?
3. Up until now, how have I been thinking about ownership? Would new ideas be helpful?
4. What would be the impact if I adopted new ideas about ownership?
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- NOTES -



