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ShootSafe: A Website to Teach Children Firearms Safety

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The Problem

- 1220 children ages 0-15 killed by firearms in the US in 2023
- About 9% of those deaths were unintentional, not suicide or homicide

Exposure

- Hunting and shooting are popular recreational activities for American youth
- Alabama study
 - 64% of children age 5-10 have firearms in the home
 - 75% know where guns are stored
 - 35% handle firearms
- 33% of unintentional firearms injuries occur while hunting and shooting, and many others relate to risky storage, transport and cleaning
- 30% of serious hunting injuries are to children



ShootSafe



An innovative and interactive sequential website that engages 10- to 12-year-old children to learn firearms safety in an experiential, educational, and enjoyable manner

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4 Components of Engagement

Graphic novel storyline

Expert videos

Testimonial videos

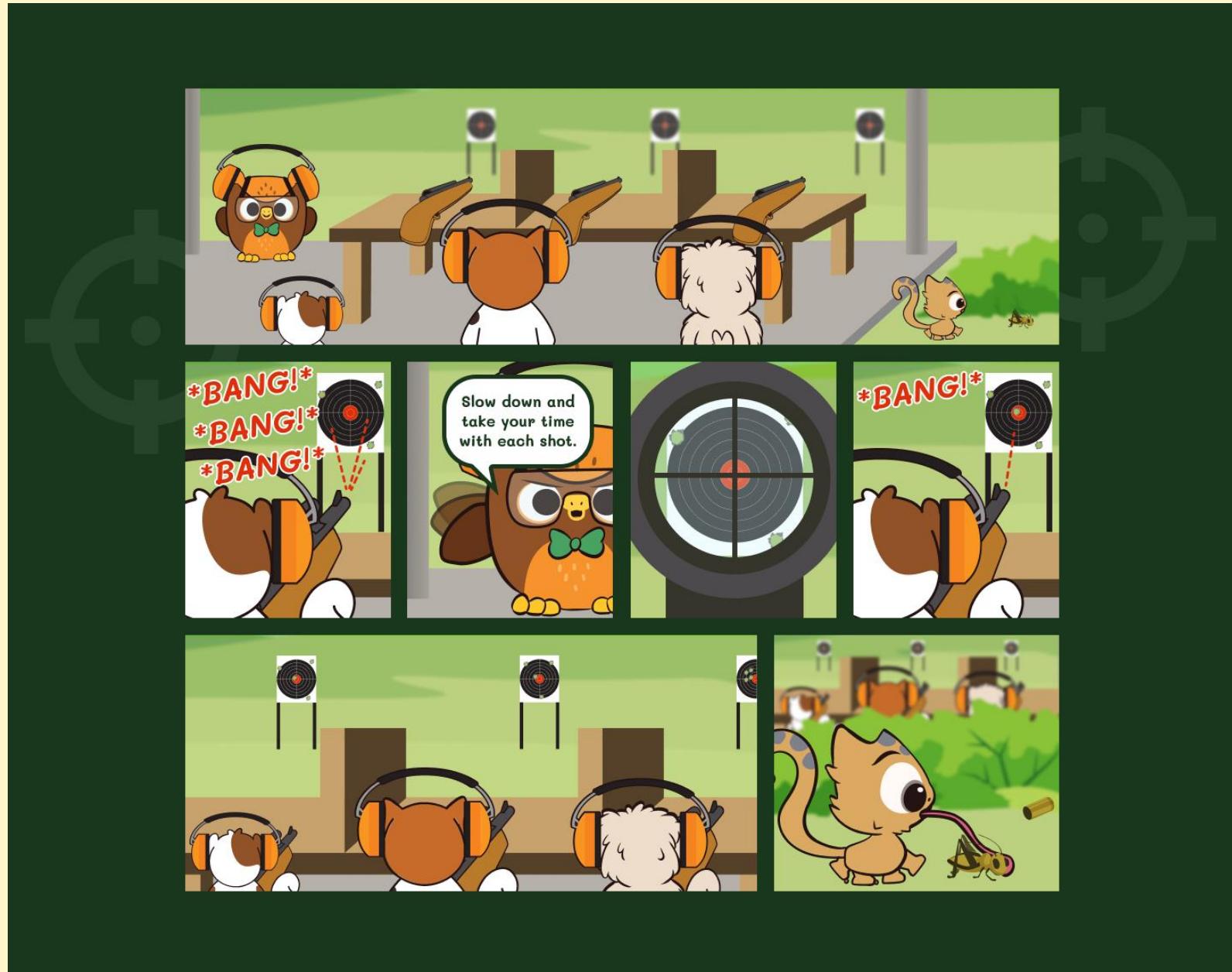
Games

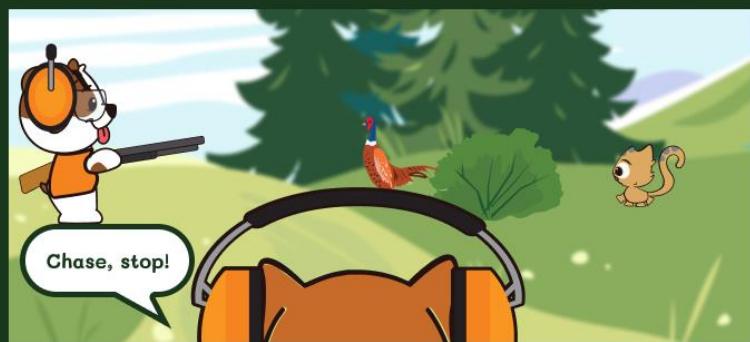
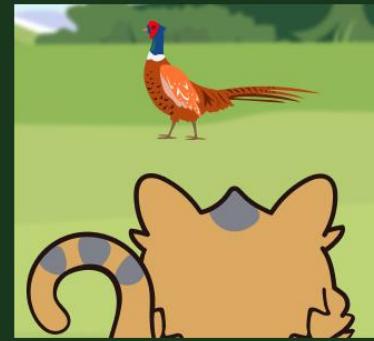


Graphic Novel Storyline



- Animal characters: no identifiable gender or race/ethnicity
- Wise owl guides child characters
- Characters view videos and play games along with child





4 Components of Engagement

Graphic novel storyline

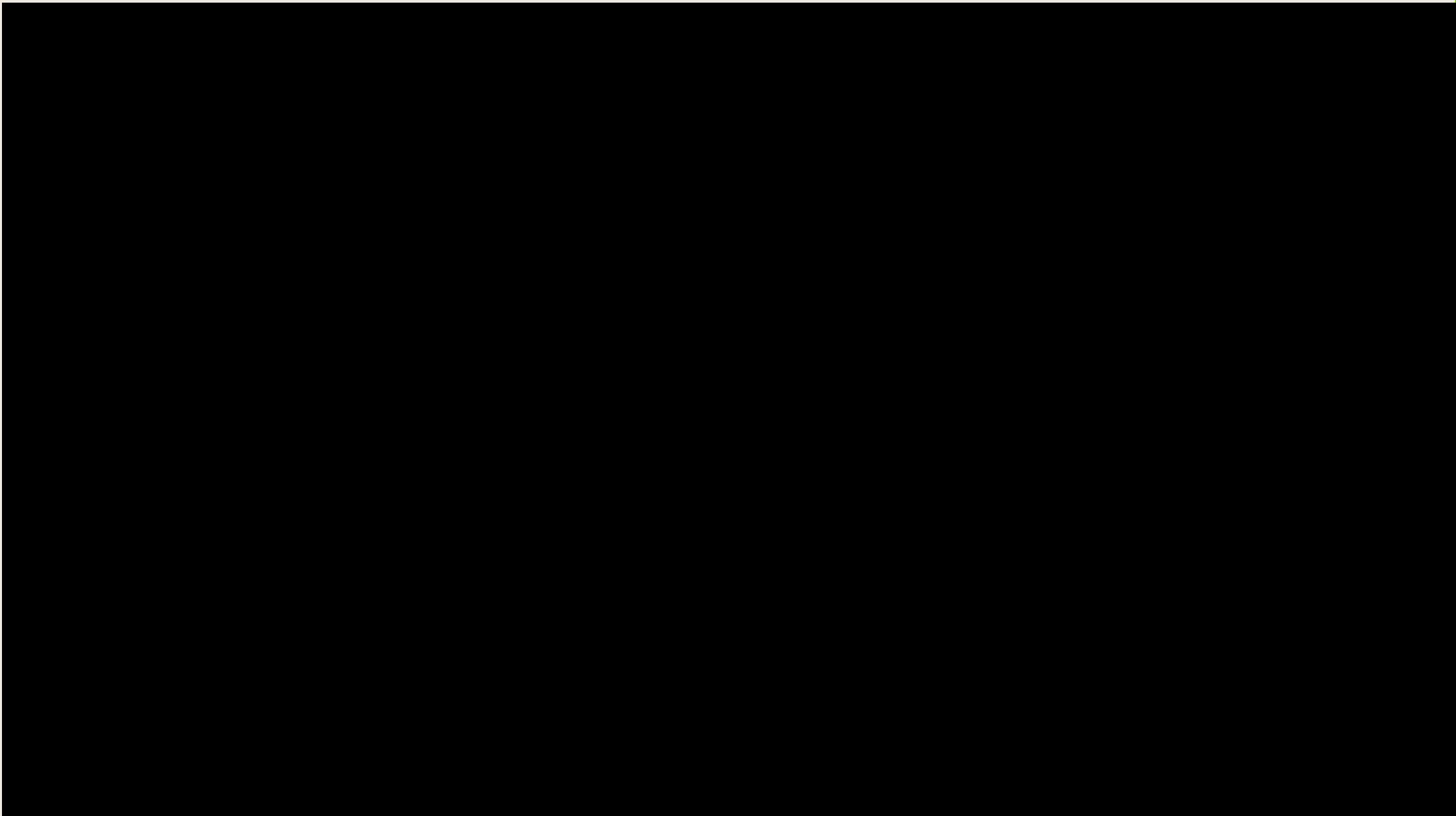
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ShootSafe Video Trailer



4 Components of Engagement

Graphic novel storyline

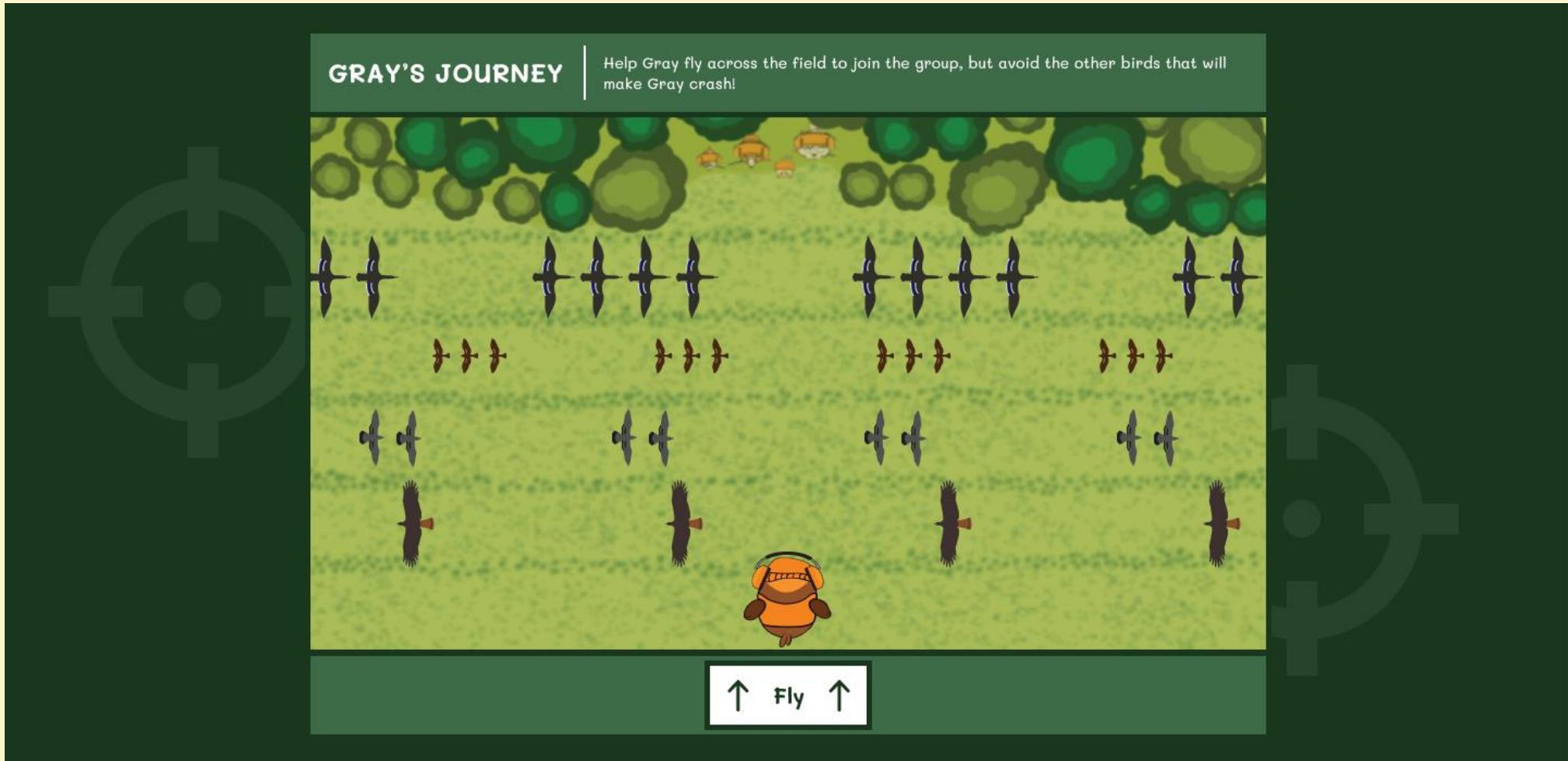
Expert videos

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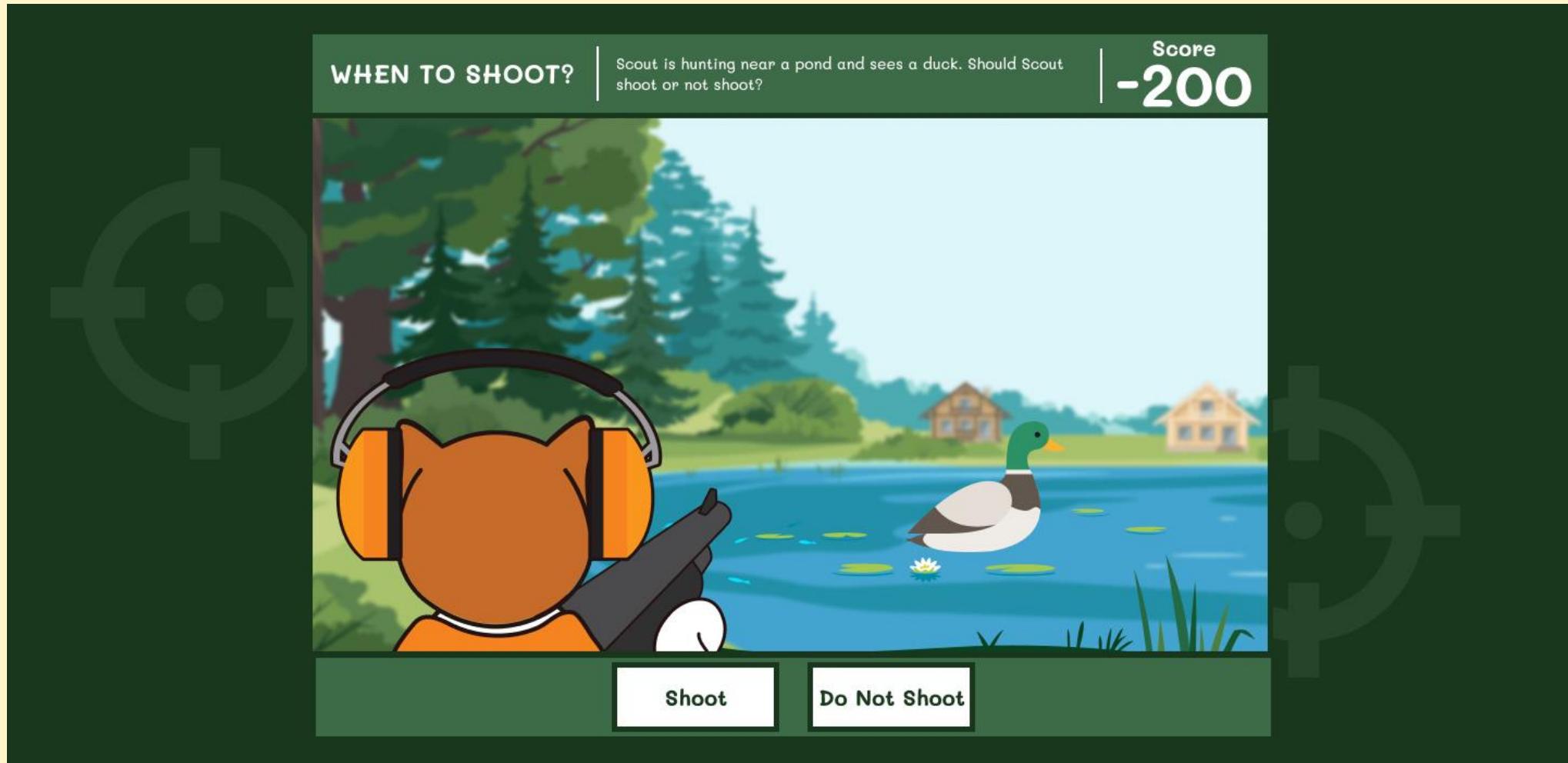
Games



Gray's Journey: Game Example

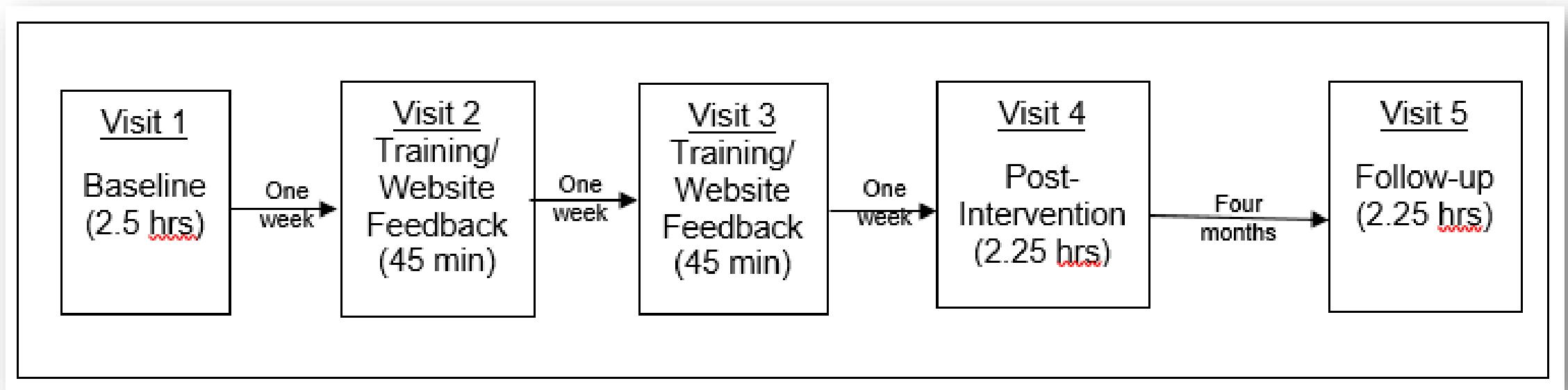


When to Shoot: Game Example



Evaluation Study

- 163 children ages 10-12 enrolled and randomized to condition

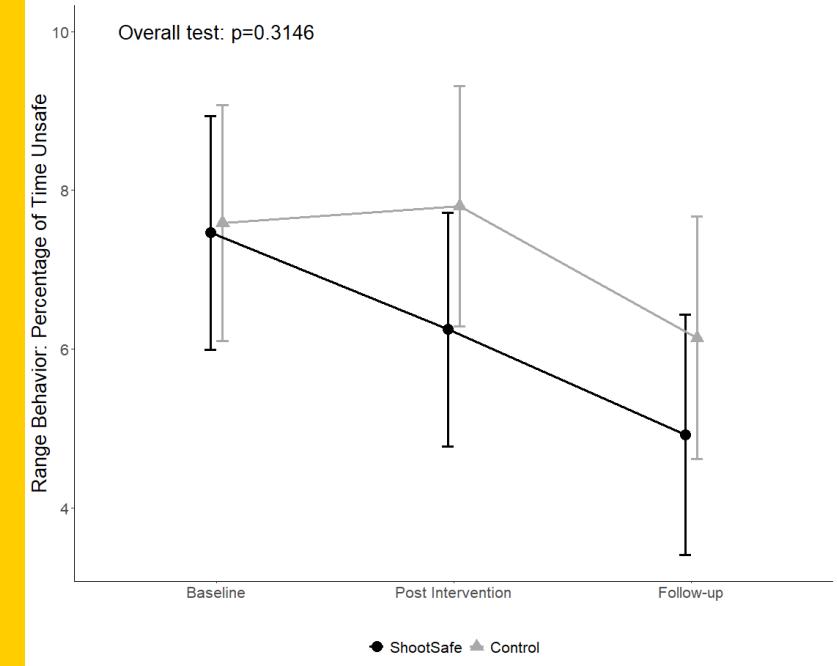
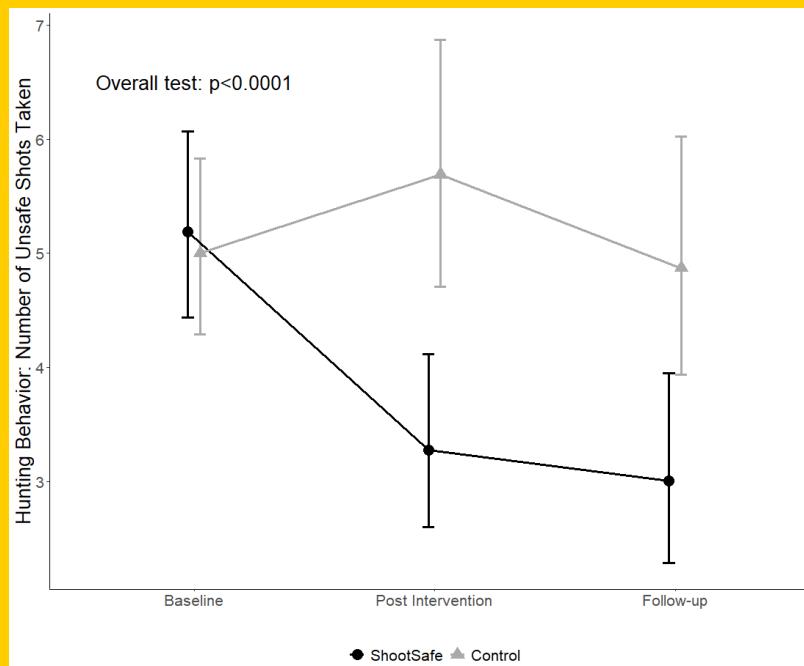
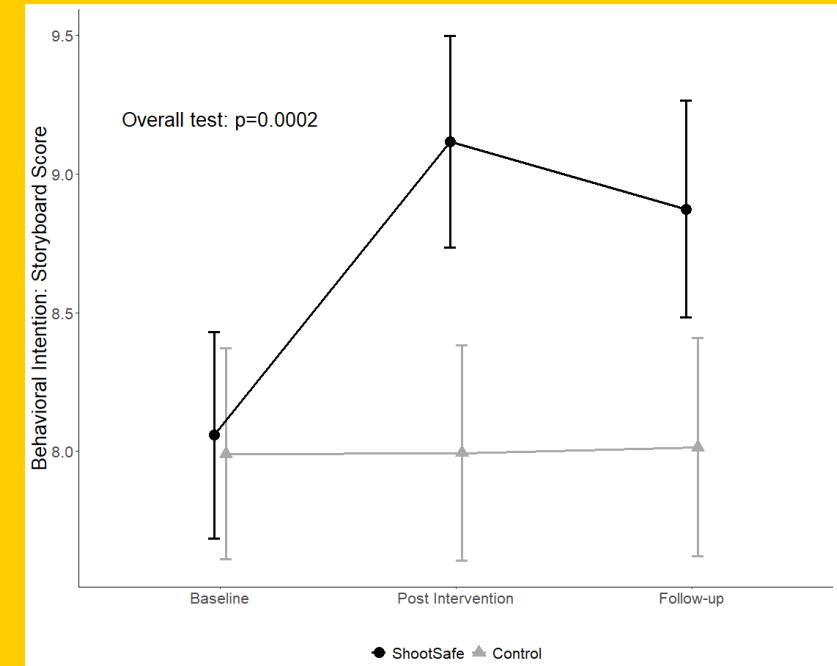
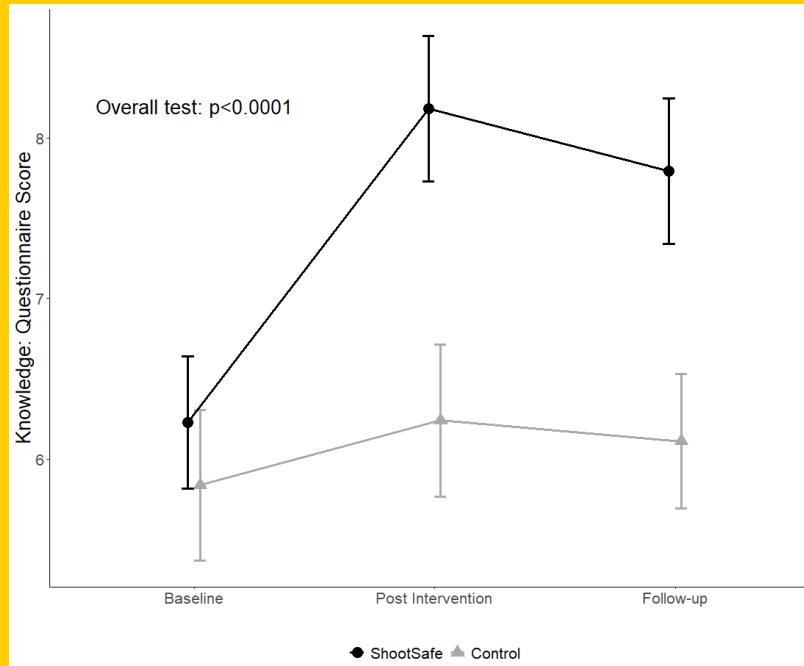


Evaluation Study

- Conditions: ShootSafe vs. control website on nutrition and wellbeing
- Outcomes:
 - Knowledge (questionnaire, photographs)
 - Behavioral intention (storyboard, photographs)
 - Hunting simulation including preparation, transport, hunting, storage
 - Shooting range simulation including transport, shooting, storage

Results

From Schwebel et al., 2025, *AJPH*



Conclusion

- ShootSafe offers:
 - Theoretical grounding
 - Multiple aspects of training, not just rote learning
 - Entertaining, age-appropriate website
 - Lessons to busy parents
 - Effective training in firearms safety
- Next steps
 - Translation to practice: Broad dissemination in partnership with non-profits, industry, and/or government

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Questions???

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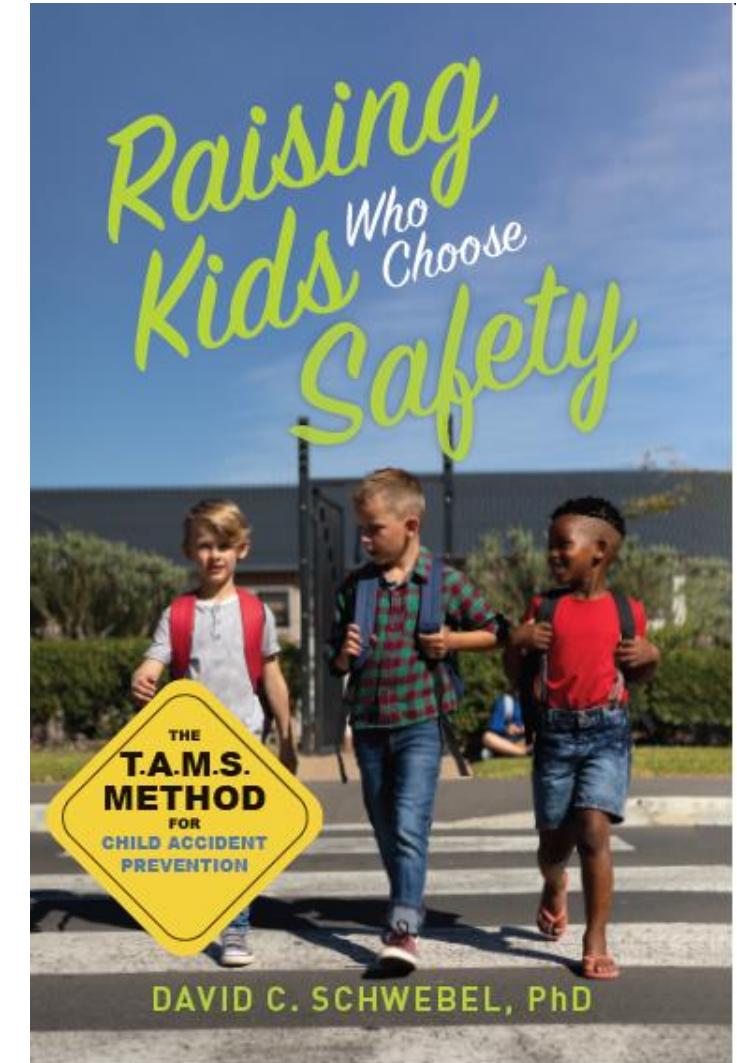
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