

Sam's Trip to the Beach

An early intervention book to teach children about distracted driving.



Written by Danielle Gibson Potere
Illustrated by Griffin Potere

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A letter to parents, educators, and adults working with children

This story was created to be entertaining to children, and Sam is meant to be a fun and engaging character. However, this story does have a greater purpose. This book is intended to educate children about distracted driving and how to effectively and respectfully speak up when their driver is distracted.

Why teach young children about distracted driving?

Although it will be a number of years before the children reading this book will get their licenses, it is vitally important that they learn about distracted driving now. At present, we have an epidemic of distracted driving, and teen drivers are disproportionately affected by distracted driving. Distracted driving now accounts for about 50% of serious teen crashes and teens are involved in fatal crashes caused by distracted driving at three times the rate of any other age group. Many children report that their parents, and caregivers, routinely drive distracted. The goals of this book are to help protect our children now, when they are passengers, and to make it less likely that they will drive distracted when they get their licenses. We want to give children of all ages knowledge, and to empower them to have a voice when they are a passenger in a vehicle.

Some questions you may want to ask children before & after reading include:

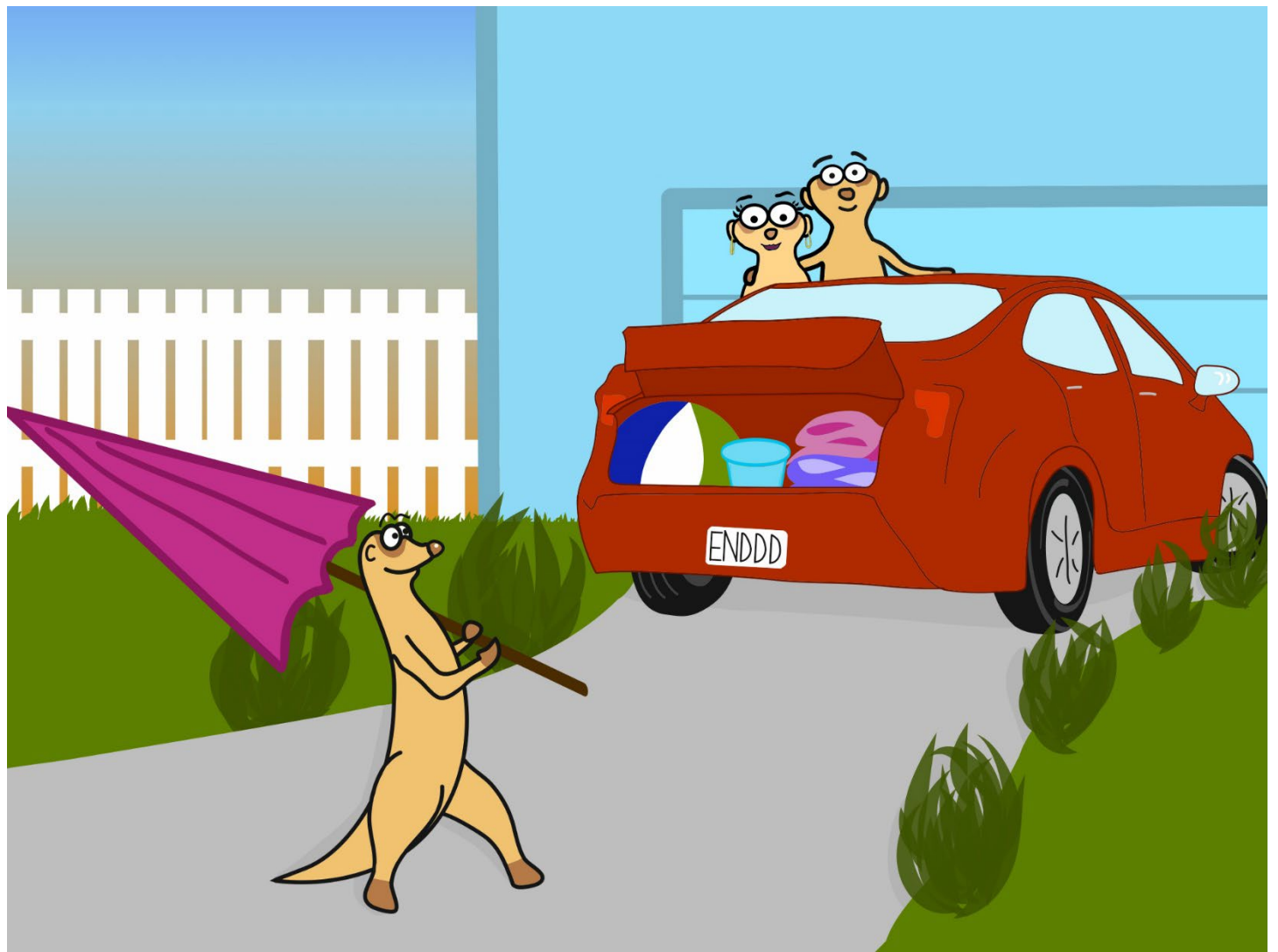
- Do you know what a distraction is?
- What rules do you think there are as a passenger in a car? How about as a driver?
- Do you know how to speak up if you are in a situation where you feel uncomfortable?
- Do you know what an “I” statement is?
- Do you know what a driver should do if they see an emergency vehicle on the road?
- Do you know what distracted driving is?
- How can you speak up against distracted driving?
- Do you believe children can make a difference?

Ask these questions before reading the story to see what knowledge the children have. Review them again after the story to see what the children have learned. Re-visit pages of the story if needed to ensure comprehension.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of Cumberland Valley Volunteer Firemen’s Association (CVVFA), the Emergency Responder Safety Institute (ERSI), and EndDD.org (End Distracted Driving), which made this project possible.

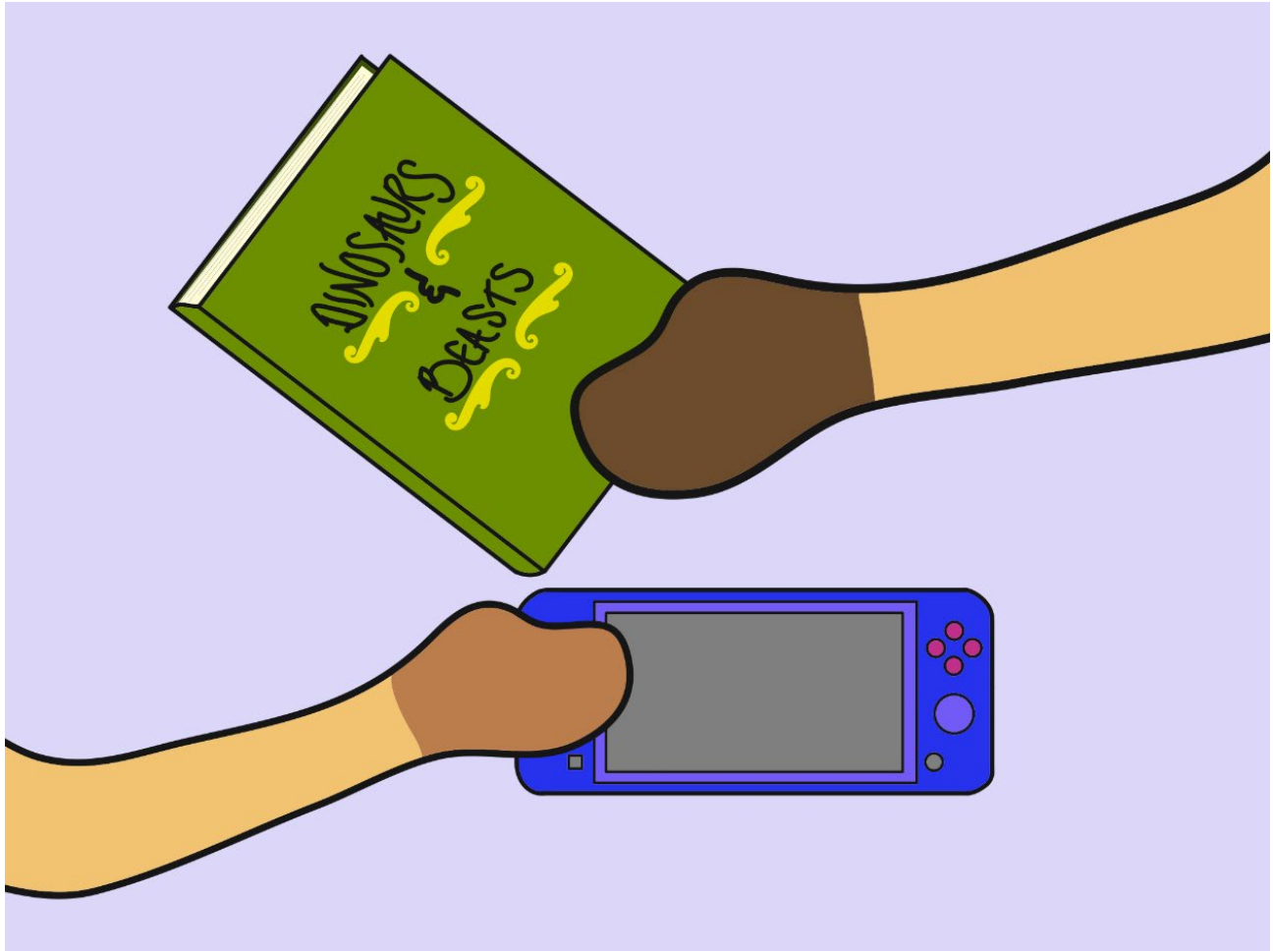


Casey Feldman Foundation



The time had come; the weekend was here.
“To the beach!” Sam’s family said with a cheer.

They packed up their bags and got into the car.
They knew that the ride to the beach wasn’t far.

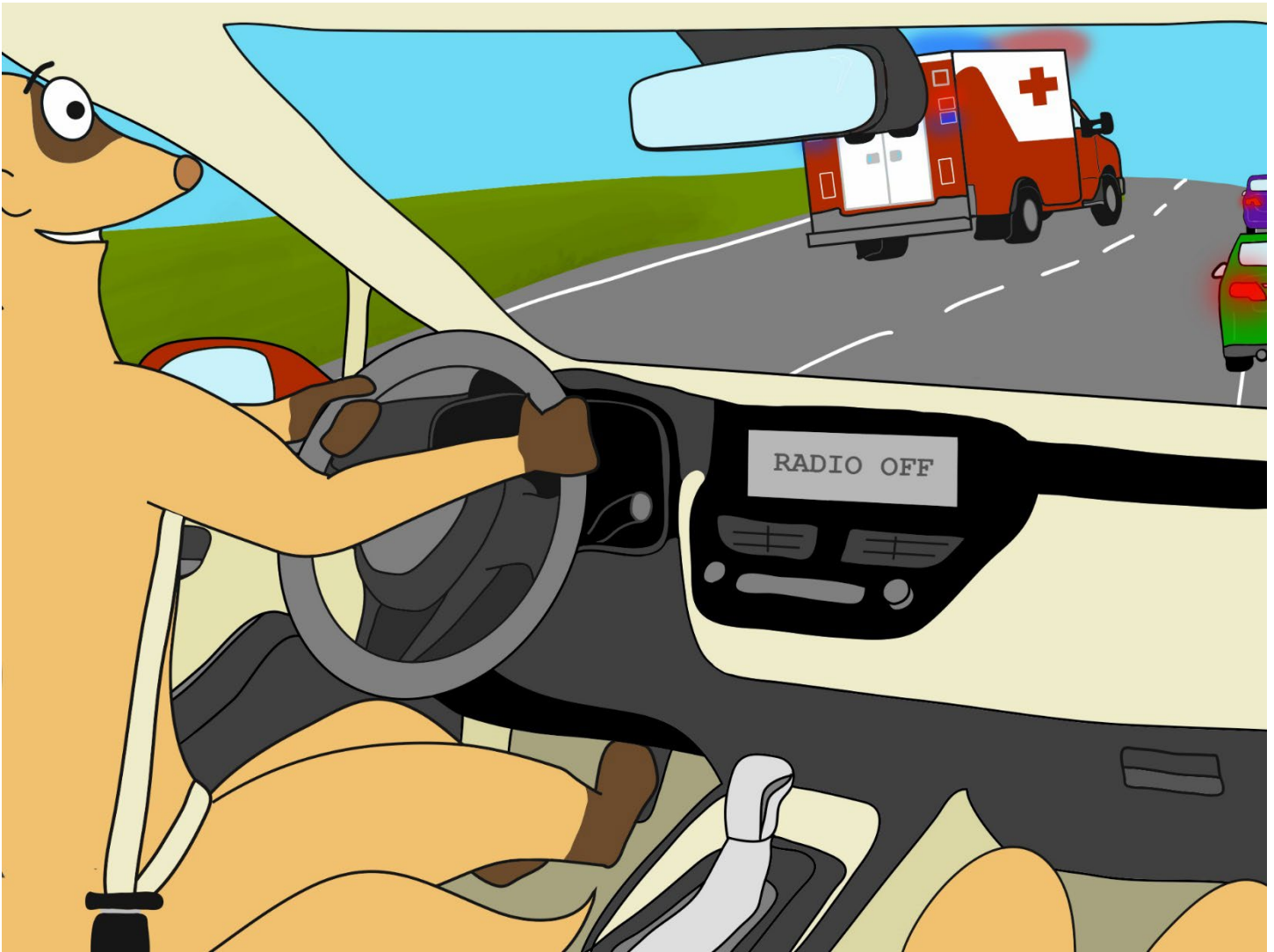


“I’ll bring my handheld game,” Sam said.
His dad replied, “Please bring a book instead.
That game could be a distraction for me when I drive.
A book will make for a quieter ride.”

“What’s a distraction?” asked curious Sam.
“And how would my game distract you?”

“A distraction is something that steals your attention from what you
are trying to do.”

“Your game will make sounds or make you react,
which could take my attention away.
It’s important for me to hear and to see
the road as we drive on our way.”



“Okay!” said Sam. “My book is packed!
I’ll read very quietly and won’t distract.”

They got into the car, buckled safe in their seats,
and Sam’s dad began to drive down the street.

Sam sat quietly reading, trying not to distract,
when he saw flashing lights up ahead from the back.
He saw a fire truck, police cars, and an ambulance too.
“What’s happening ahead, Dad? We need to get through!”



Dad said, "It's okay, Sam. We'll get where we need to go.
But when we see those lights, it's our job to drive slow.

When there's trouble on the road and first responders appear,
We must slow down and move over to make the road clear.

They are here to help, and we must help them, too.
We move to the side so that they can get through.

We help keep them safe as they help those in need.
Then move on down the road to where we want to be.

We must do our best to drive the right way,
to make their jobs easier and safer each day.

It should make you feel good, to know they will come,
For me and for you, and for everyone."

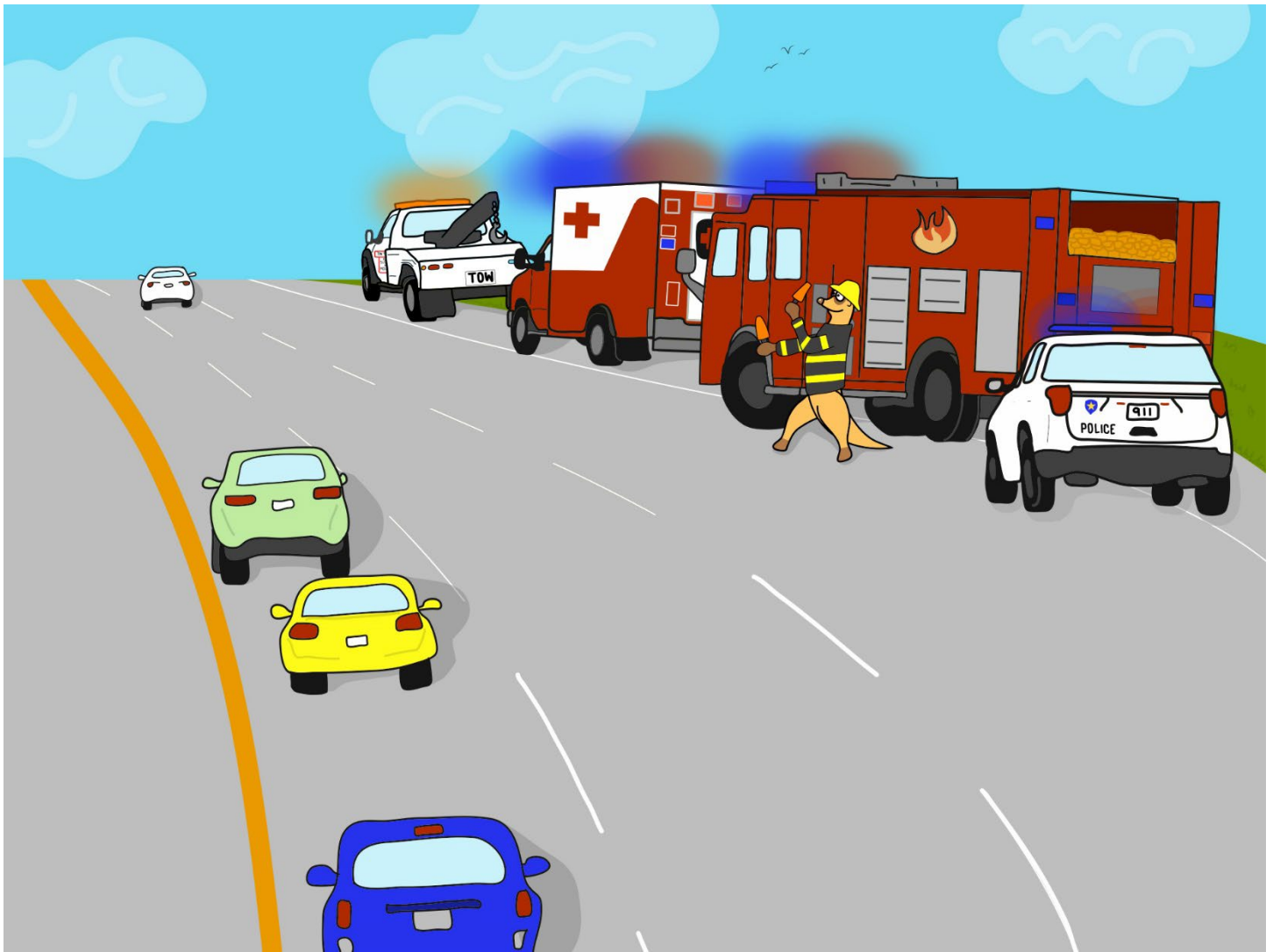


“Yikes!” said Sam those cars look banged up
How could anyone drive them? They look like they’re stuck.

You’re right Sam, sometimes cars can’t move on their own
So we call in a tow truck to help them get home

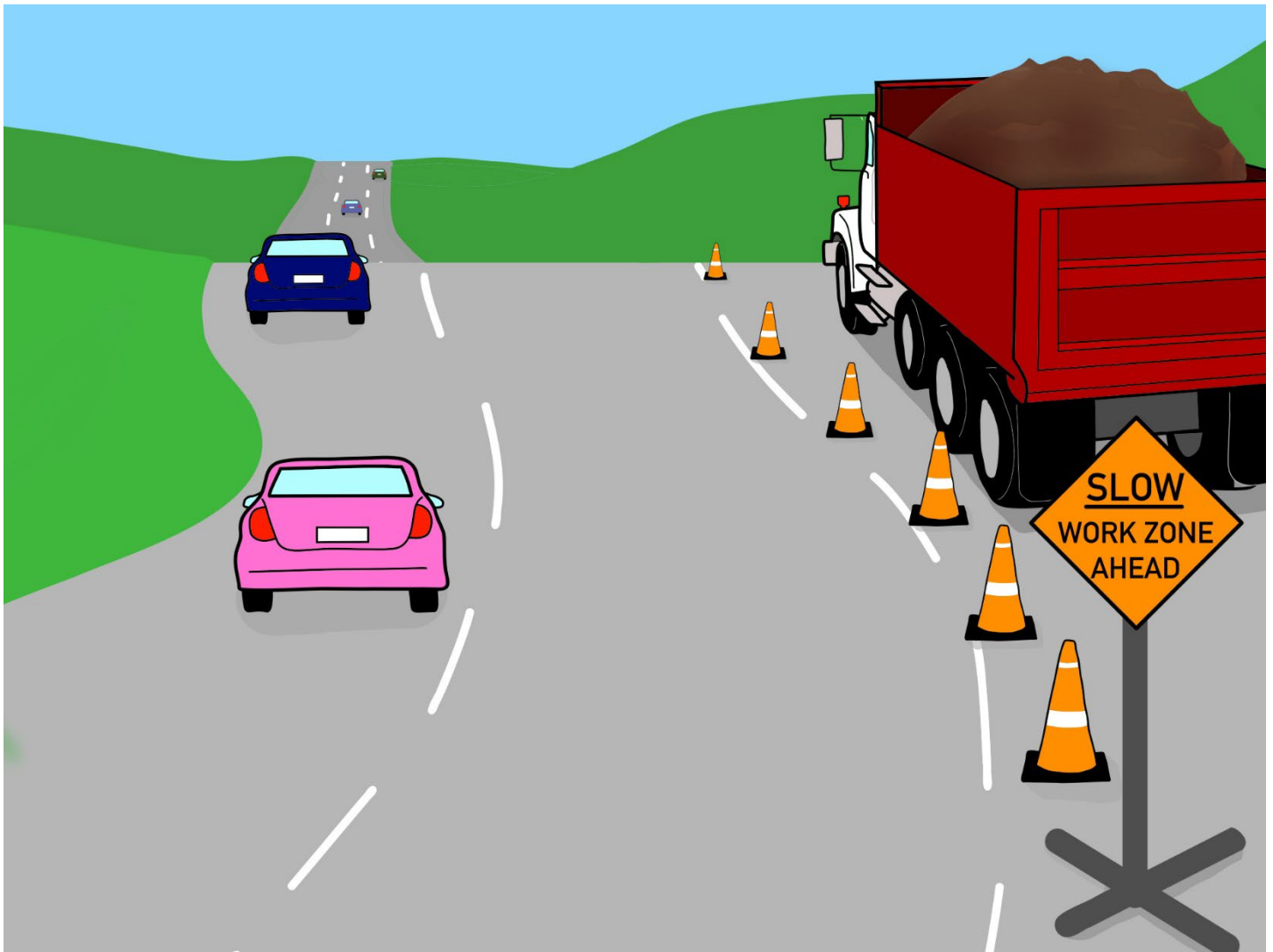
A tow truck will come and take them away
So they can be fixed to ride another day.

When this happens and we’re driving by on the road
We must slow down, move over, and wait while they’re towed.



“You’re right, Dad,” said Sam. “Why didn’t I think of that?”
“You’ll learn more as you grow, Sam, and more as we chat.”

Sam’s dad patiently waited as the trouble was cleared.
“Now we’re back on the path to the beach!” Sam cheered.



Sam spotted a sign and he asked what it said.
That sign says "Slow! Work zone ahead".

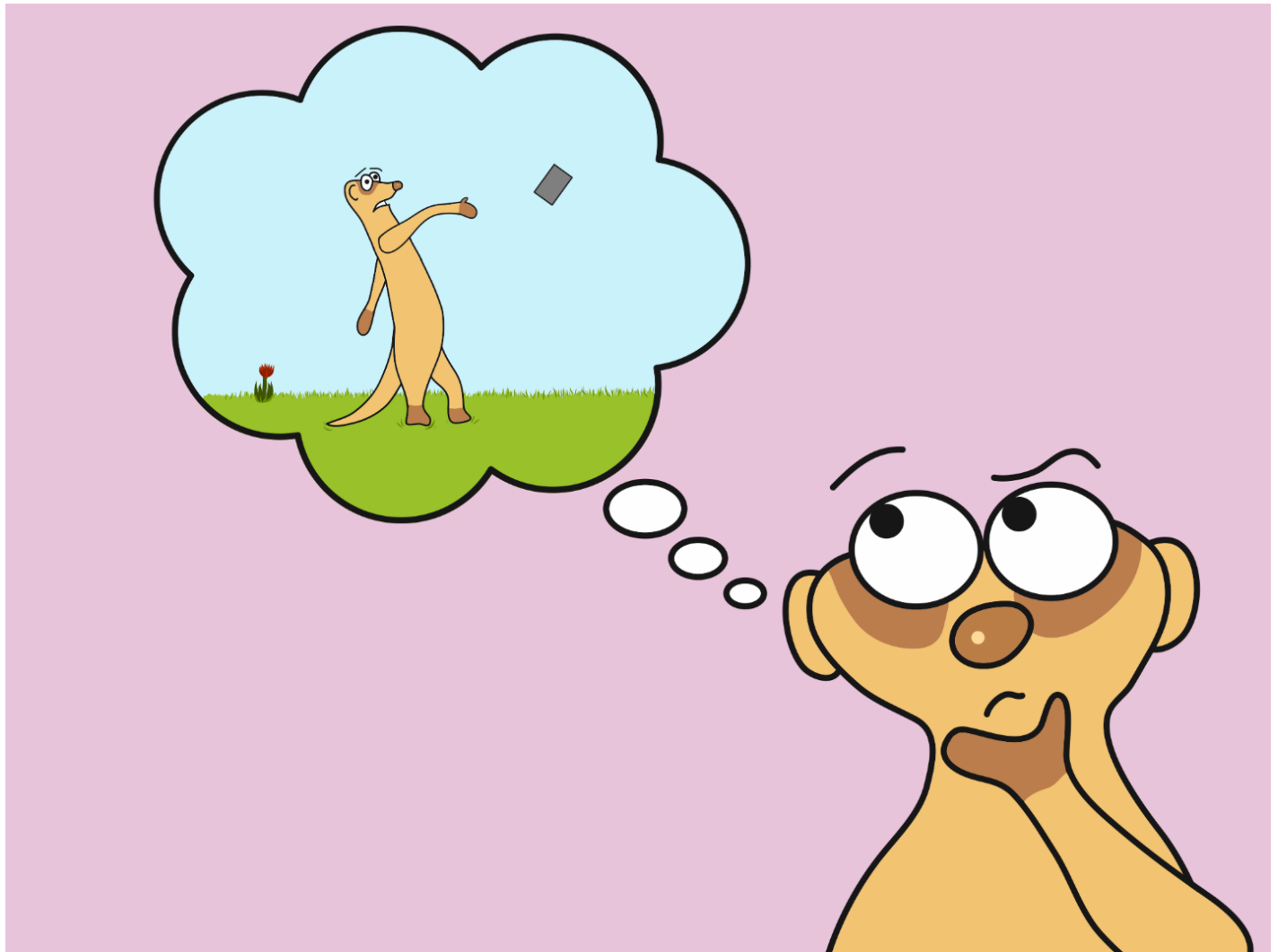
Those people are working to make our roads safe
It is our job to slow down and give plenty of space.



A little while later, Dad's phone started to buzz.
He took his eyes from the road to see who it was.

Dad said, "Let me see who is calling; it won't take long."
Sam thought to himself, "I think this is wrong!"

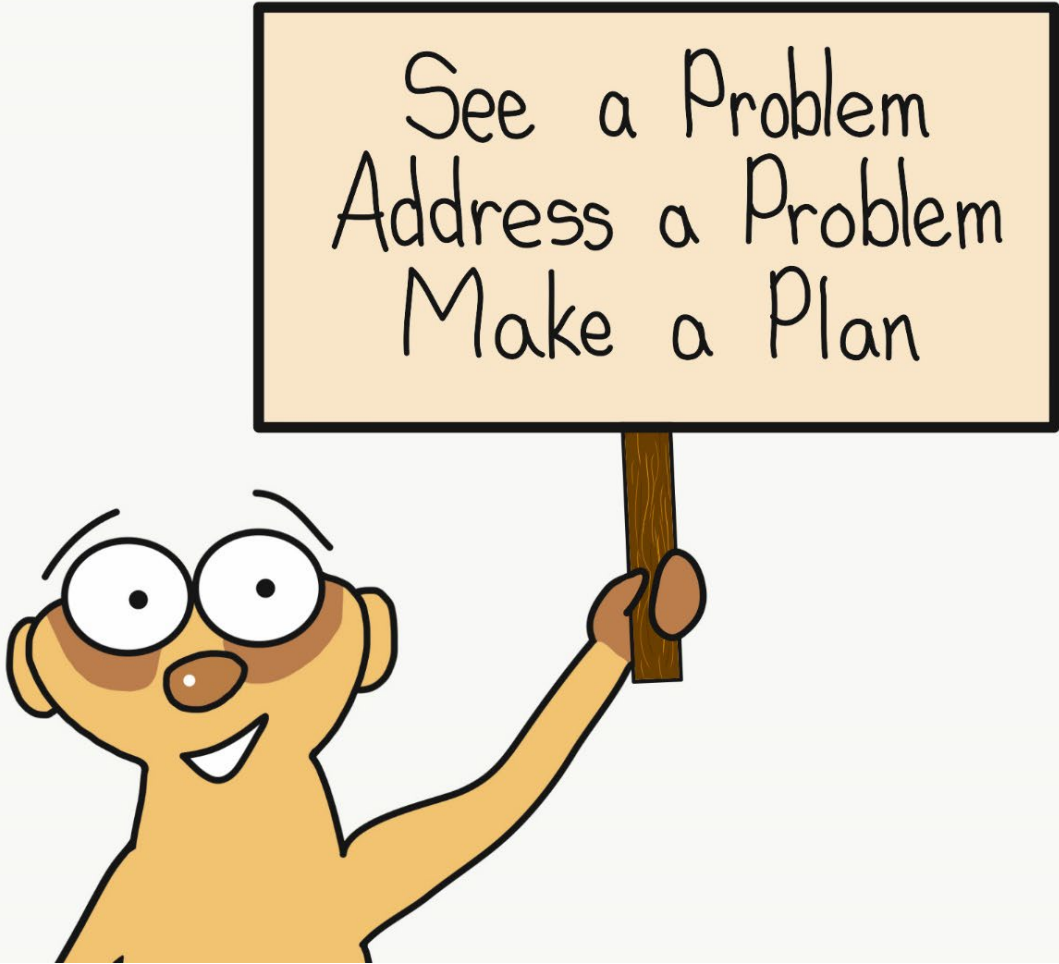
My dad should not text while he's driving the car.
It will distract him from looking at where we are."



Sam started to think about what he should do or say.
He thought about taking his dad's phone away.

I could take his phone and hide it in a flash!
I could yell at him and say, "You will make us crash!"

But Sam thought, that's not what I should say.
He'll get angry and won't get the message that way.



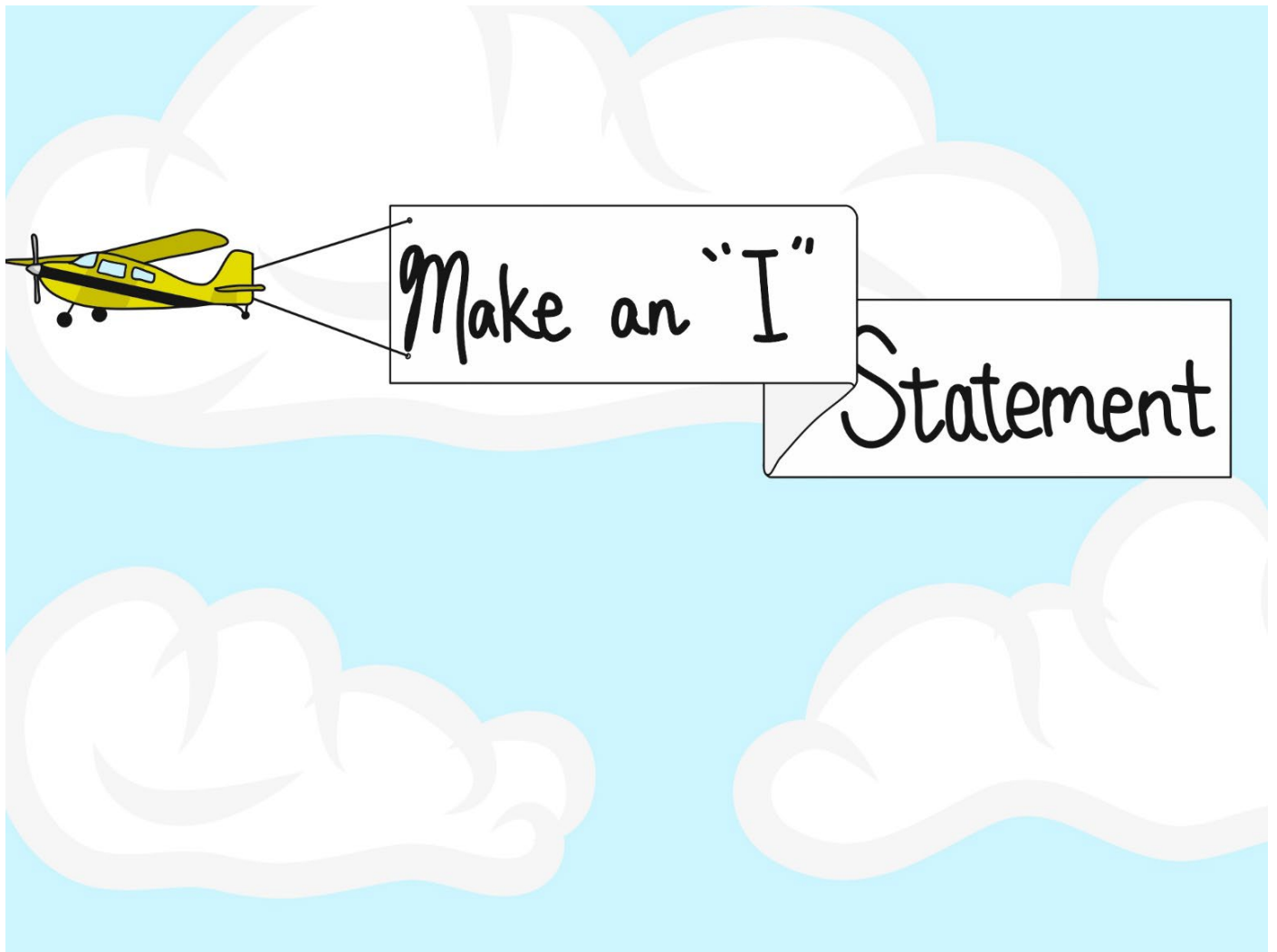
See a Problem
Address a Problem
Make a Plan

See a problem, address a problem, and make a plan.
This is a system that works well for Sam.

I know when I say “you,” it makes him feel bad,
so I need to say something that won’t make him mad.

When I say “you,” it can sound like I’m blaming,
and others may think that I am shaming.

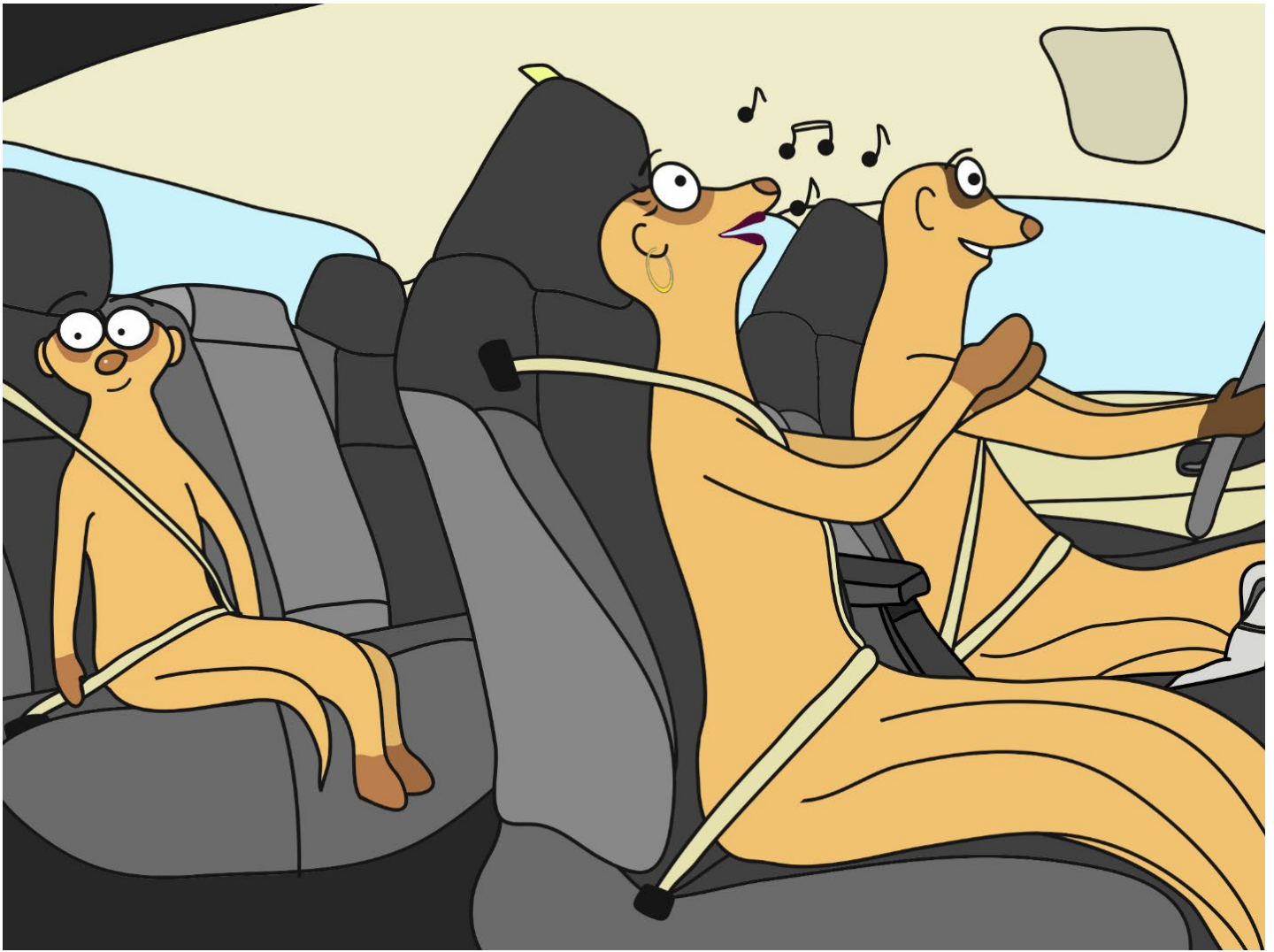
An “I” statement is something I learned all about.
I can speak up and kindly get my message out.



After thinking it through, Sam had made his choice.
He said to his dad in a kind and calm voice,

“Excuse me, Dad, but I feel scared
when you look at your phone while you’re driving somewhere.”

“May I answer it for you, or can it wait
until we get where we’re going and we’re parked safe?”



“Sam, I am so sorry I gave you a scare.
Thank you for speaking up back there.

Sometimes we need a kid to mention
When we make a mistake or don't pay attention.

You told me your feelings the best possible way.
I understand all that you had to say.

I won't look at my phone when I drive.
That is the best way to stay safe and arrive.”

Dad focused on driving; Mom started to sing,
Sam looked out the window to see everything.

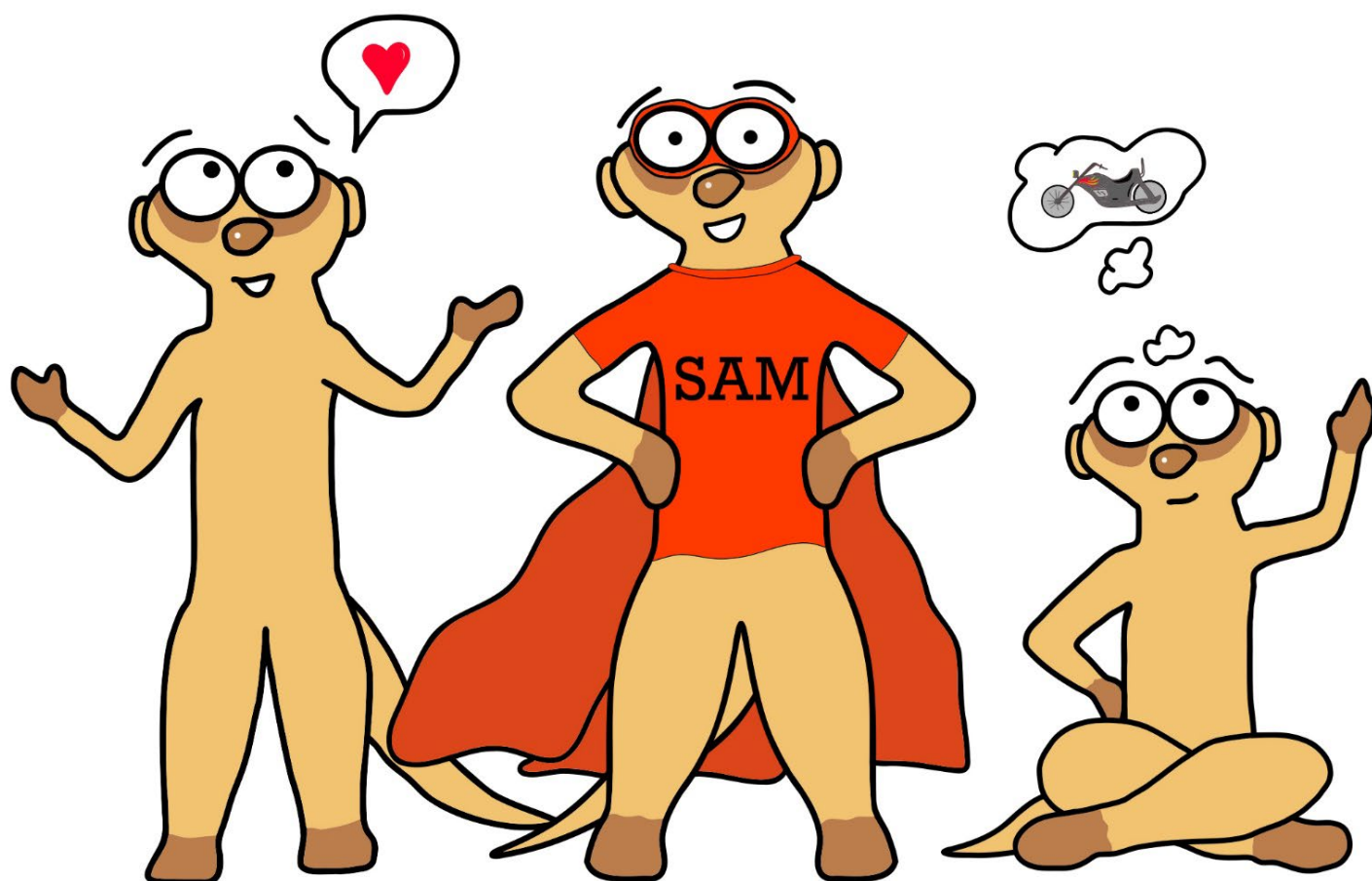


For what he saw next, Sam wasn't prepared.
A mom putting on lipstick and a kid who looked scared.

Sam knew putting on make-up was driving distracted.
He wondered how the other kid reacted.

Did he know the right thing to say to his mom?
Did he make an "I" statement to explain what was wrong?

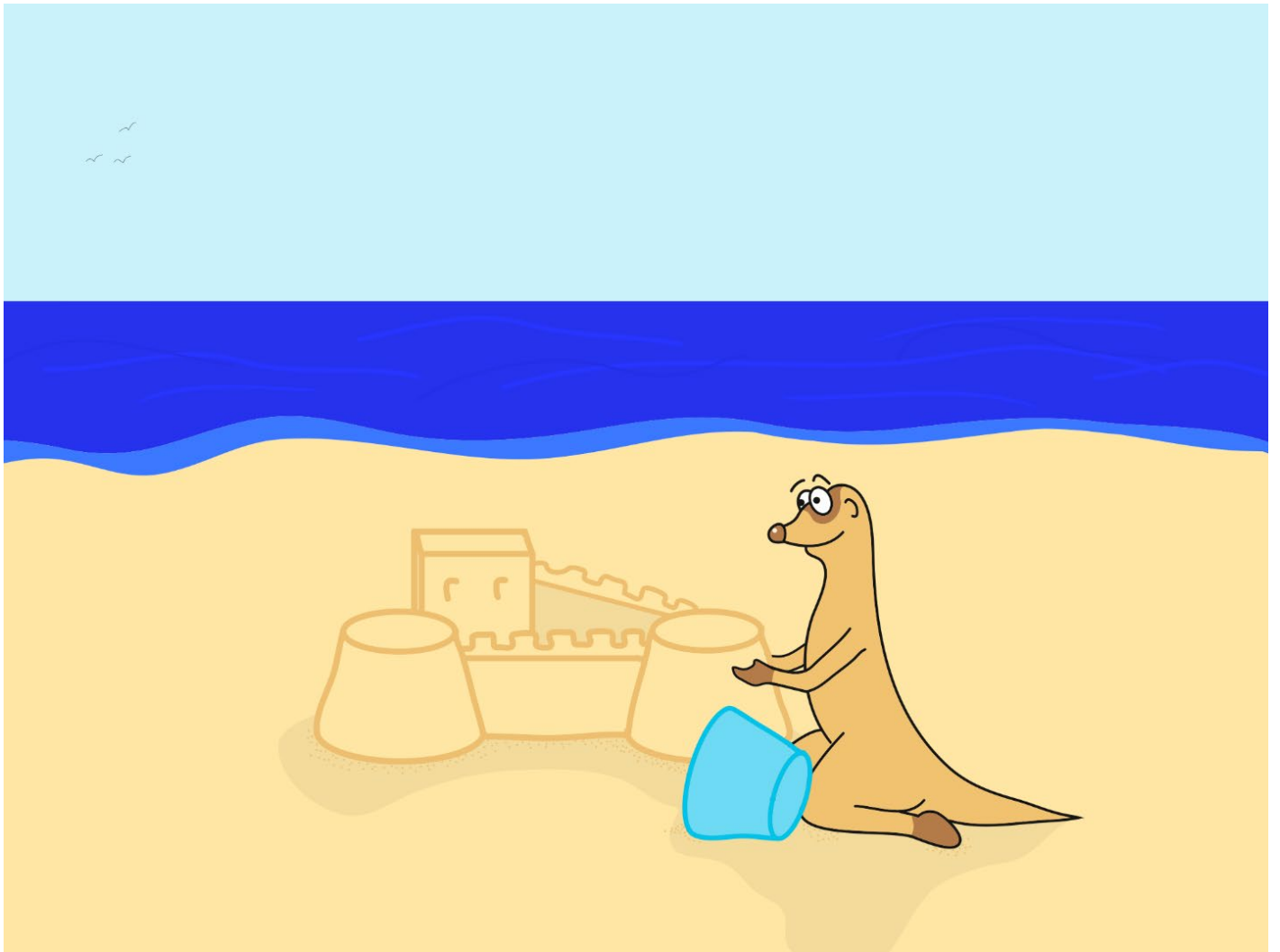
Sam hoped that he knew the right thing to do.
He hoped that the kid used "I" and not "you."



Sam started to wonder if all kids had learned
to speak up when they're in a car and concerned.

Sam learned when you see a problem, you say how you feel.
Say it with love and they'll know that it's real.

It's important to speak up, no matter your age,
to stop a big problem and keep others safe.



Sam and his family made it safe to the beach.
They played and they laughed, and they had ice cream treats.

Sam continues to learn and is trying to do
The best that he can, and he hopes you will, too.

DRIVER LICENSE



I.D. No.

1234

Name

SAM

Age

16

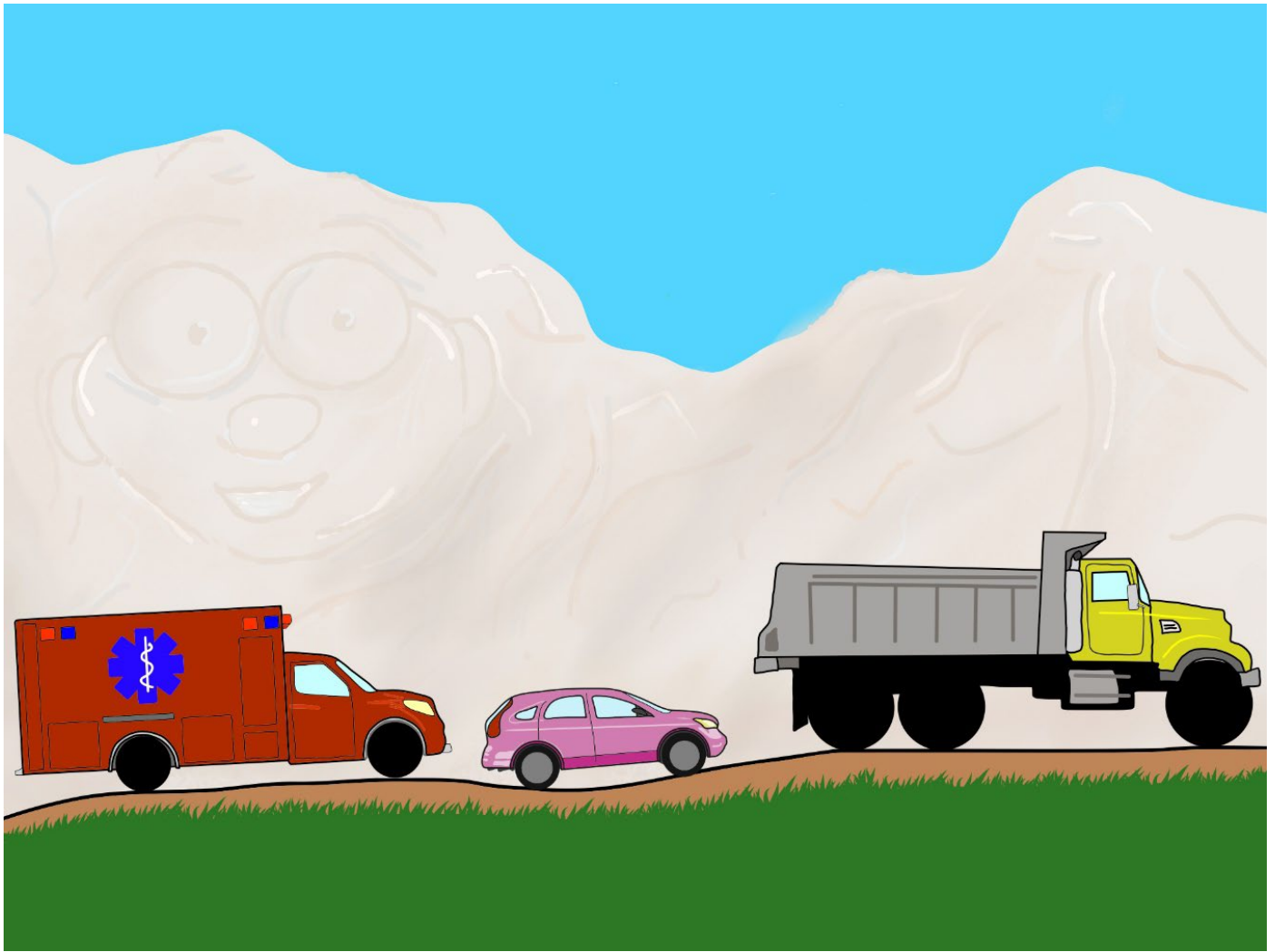
Sam
Signature

Someday, Sam will get his driver's license, too.
He will not drive distracted - he knows what to do.

He will look at the road and not at his phone,
When he's driving with others or driving alone.

When he sees first responders, he'll slow down and give space.
Because they are everyday heroes who keep the road safe.

He'll keep the volume low, and won't eat and drive,
He'll focus until he can safely arrive.



Sam hopes you'll drive focused and stay distraction free.
Safe driving is a big responsibility.

When you look at your phone, you can't see what's there,
You'll cause accidents and problems when you're not aware.

You know to speak up when you're a passenger, too,
Now you know how to do this saying "I" and not "you."

Respect is important to have for all others
When driving or talking to fathers and mothers.

If everyone tries hard and is more aware,
The roads will be safer for all of us to share.

Help keep our First Responders safe!
When you see flashing lights...
SLOW DOWN then MOVE OVER
and BE PREPARED TO STOP



Thank you, Sam, and all our future drivers,
for driving without distraction!