**The Child and the Big Loud Dog**

Imagine a little child, say aged two or three, walking down the street with a parent. As they walk past one yard, a large dog comes running up to the fence barking loudly. The child starts and begins to cry. What does the parent need to do?

S/he kneels down to be able to look the child in the eye. The parent puts his or her arms around the child--so the child knows where her own body is and where the parent’s body is. The parent uses words, “That big dog scared you when he came running up so fast. His bark is loud. But it’s okay. He’s behind the fence. I won’t let him hurt you. Look, his tail is wagging; he wants to say ‘hi’.”

The parent gives words to the child’s feelings (“You’re scared”), explains why (“the big dog was loud”), and offers reassurance (“I’ll protect you”). In a child’s lifetime, this kind of sequence happens thousands of times over and becomes internalized.

