💬 Talking to Your 4-Year-Old Before a Visit with Their Other Parent (After Time Apart)

For Parents Navigating Divorce or Separation
Situation: Your young child is seeing their other parent (e.g., Dad) for the first time in a while—maybe after a few weeks or a month. This script helps you prepare your child for the visit in a way that supports emotional regulation, connection, and security.

🧸 What to Say to Your Child (Suggested Script)

Try using a calm voice during a cozy moment like during play, bath time, or while sharing a snack.

You:
"Hey buddy, guess what? Daddy's coming to see you today! It's been a while since you've seen him, huh?"

(Pause and allow space for your child's response. They may talk, stay quiet, or move around—that's all okay.)

You:
"I know it's been a whole month. That's a long time when you're 4! You might feel excited... or even a little unsure. However you feel is okay."

(Optional: You can add something like... "Sometimes when I haven't seen someone in a long time, I feel wiggly in my tummy or don't know what to say right away.")

You:
"Even though things are changing—like how Daddy and I don't live in the same house anymore—you still have two parents who love you so much. That will never, ever change."

You:
"Today when Daddy gets here, you might want to run and jump into his arms… or you might want to watch for a minute first. However you feel is just right. And I'll be here to help if it feels big."

⚡ For Very Active Kids: Regulate Through Movement

If your child is energetic or wiggly as they wait:

You:
“Want to show me how fast your feet are before Daddy comes? Let’s do 5 jumps or race to the door!”

(This helps regulate nervous energy and sets a positive tone.)

💤 After the Visit: Support for Later

Later that day or at bedtime, gently check in:

You:
“You did such a great job seeing Daddy today. That was a lot of big feelings. Want to tell me your favorite part? Or maybe draw it tomorrow?”

(This helps your child process the visit through story or play.)

💖 Reminder for You

Transitions after separation are emotional—for both children and adults. Offering consistent reassurance, predictability, and warm presence helps your child feel safe and loved in both homes.