

I'm ready'



Our centre korowai (Māori cloak) is a symbol of leadership that often has an exuberant group of children requesting to adorn that reflects the valued position of rangatira (leader). This morning while contemplating who to ask before being overcome with volunteers, I heard a faint voice beside me and as I turned, "Whaea can I be rangatira?" (Leader). Looking up at me with a little uncertainty but with a tone of excitement matched with a brilliant smile, was Devon. I agreed, "Ae!, Tino pai Devon" (Yes! Very good)

To my surprise and joy Devon had chosen to take the initiative before others in requesting this highly sought after role. Devon is often a little shy in standing and speaking. But on this occasion he showed us how much he was ready to take on the position. With some gentle coaching and assurance from his friends his confidence beamed.

Devon also embraces his role to support others whom are not yet ready to participate. He gently and quietly assumes the position of kaiāwhina, (helper). Ata mārie whānau, Ko ... tēnei. (Good morning family, this is) on their

behalf. This role required his expertness in selecting waiata (songs) appropriate in supporting the karakia (prayer). Reciting the karakia as well as he can, but also in acknowledging others he guides and supports. He is the main speaker, similar to the role of the first speaker of a whaikōrero, (formal speech) in which he lays out the format of the gathering and brings people together.

It is to envision this role as a future possibility he will undertake with pride and confidence in any situation he finds himself in Devon's first language is English and has grasped the Māori language well over the last year. It is an important accomplishment in the cultural identity of our tamariki. He recites his pepeha first and shows his competence therefore encouraging others around him they can also stand and speak.