

A Practice at Home

2/5/08

I offered to show Josiah photos of my trip away. As I opened up the photo programme on the computer, he noticed a photo of himself and his friends. He asked me to show him this album of photos and as I did, he accurately recounted who was involved in each slide, what they were doing and how they were doing things...e.g. Using the hollow blocks, they had put them on and were behaving like robots or making a seesaw using a plank and a doll as the fulcrum!

When a slide of his baby cousin, (Carew, who had died in February), appeared he asked me to show him her photos. As we revisited, he began to make connections to his mother's two cousins who had died. One, Ihaka, had died recently, and the other, Kenana, had died late last year.

He recalled the circumstances of Kenana's death. "He got in his truck and died." He then talked about the two baby cousins that had died and asked why they died. After I told him, he was quiet for a bit then talked about his grandfather, Great Grand Koro, Great, Great Gran and how they had all died too. He pointed up to a photo of his Great Grand Koro and Great Great Gran and made connections as to who they belonged to. "Great Grand Koro was Koro's Dad eh Nanny?" I nodded wondering what he would say next.

He was quiet for a few minutes and I shared the silence with him, remembering, reflecting. Then he said, "I miss my big cousins." I took this to mean Ihaka and Kenana. He then turned back to his baby cousin, Carew's photo and pointed to a couple of photos on the bookcase of Carew and another baby cousin, Shea, who had died before he was born. He asked for me to get their photos down for him. I did so and as he looked at their photos he again asked me why they had died. He stroked their faces several times and was silent for about a minute then he gave me their photos back, moved away to where his older cousins were watching T.V. Without saying anything, he climbed up beside them and began to watch also. The moment had passed.