

Severed hand put back in 10hr op

By GREG MEYLAN

SURGEONS AT Middlemore Hospital last night reattached and realigned the severed hand of an eight-year-old Northland boy hurt in a demolition yard accident on Friday.

Plastic surgeon Dr Murray Beagley said the 10-hour operation had gone well and he was positive it would be successful.

Doctors replaced the boy's thumb with the forefinger and shuffled the remaining three fingers along one place.

The accident happened when the boy was visiting the demolition yard with his father. He was playing with a piece of rope, which was wound around his hand, while sitting on the back of a ute.

As the car drove off, the rope became caught and severed his hand.

He was airlifted to hospital and the hand put on ice overnight. The operation, by a team of surgeons, began around 10am.

Beagley said the boy lost the hand in a line below the base of the thumb across to below the little finger.

He said the thumb was too badly damaged to be replaced.

"We moved the index finger across to become the new thumb and moved the other fingers across as one block of tissue in order to give him a thumb and two fingers in order that he could have a useful grip with his hand."

Beagley said the hand was cleaned up overnight and it took the surgery team a couple of hours yesterday morning to decide exactly what they were going to do. He said the hand would be good for holding a pen or cutlery but not for gripping hard.

"This was a really genuinely nice kid with a lovely whanau."

Beagley was confident the boy would recover and adapt well