Jan Ken Po (Junk an’ a po)

Age: Preschool-age (3-4 years)

This activity helps your child's development in this domain: Physical, Language and Literacy

What You Need:

Nothing

What To Do:

1. Use Jan Ken Po to decide who goes first when taking turns. Two people make the motions at the same time while saying the words together. On the word “sho,” each person makes a rock, paper, or scissors:
   - Paper “beats” rock.
   - Rock “beats” scissors.
   - Scissors “beat” paper.
   Explain why one action “beats” another: paper covers the rock, the rock can smash the scissors, and the scissors can cut the paper.
2. Show your child how to make three hand motions that represent paper (flat, open hand), rock (closed fist), and scissors (make a V with middle and pointer finger).
3. Share the words to Jan Ken Po below and show your child how to do the motions.

Jan ken po
(Swing closed fist back and forth three times, in rhythm with each syllable)
Ai kono sho.
(Continue swinging; when “sho” is said, make a paper, rock, or scissors).

Localized version:
Junk an’ a po
I canna show.

4. Talk about taking turns when doing things with other people.
5. As your child becomes familiar with the Jan Ken Po game, help her keep track of how many times each person wins a round to determine the overall “winner.” For example, the “winner” is the person who wins three of the five times played. Then, the winner plays with a new player.

VARIATION:
Use a shorter version with a younger child by showing paper, rock, or scissors on “po” or by using only two of the motions—paper and rock.