



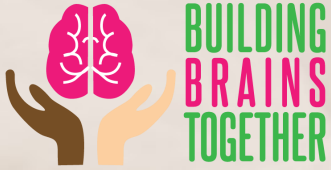
Napi's Hand Game Piikhh Tsikhh Ssini

By Carl Brave Rock



This story began a long, long time ago. Back then the animals used to talk. They still speak but you can't understand them anymore. Cats' meow, dogs bark and the cows' moo. They still speak, we just don't understand them anymore. Back then the animals were involved in a dispute. These animals felt their leader should be the leader of all of the creatures in the world. The bears **kiááyo** said "we're strong, we should be the leader of all creatures of the world". The birds **pi'kssii** said "we can fly, we can see everything! We should be the leaders of all the creatures of the world". Then the wolf, **makaóyi**, said, "we travel in packs, we are very skilled in battle" they said, "we should be the leader of all the creatures in the world". Then we have the mice, **káánaisskiinaiksi**, they said "we don't want to be the leader of all the creatures of the world". "We're too small. Then all of the other animals began to fight. It got loud. All of those poor little creatures, the mice, **káánaisskiinaiksi**, got so scared they ran off to the Old Man, Napi, and ran to his tipi and rang the doorbell 'ding'. The Old Man said, "what do you want you crazy little creatures"? They said nothing! All of the animals are fighting! You've got to do something"! Napi said "sure. Gather all of the animals tonight. We're going to have the biggest competition the world has ever seen"! That night, all of the animals showed up. Every animal showed up and they were still fighting! Still arguing. We had the bears, **kiááyo** the birds **pi'kssii**, the wolves **makaóyiiksi** and the mice **káánaisskiinaiksi**.





Napi stood up in front of them and said, “settle down”! Then he reached into his pocket and pulled out two bones, one clean and one with a stripe. He put those bones in his hands and he mixed them up, back and forth and back and forth. Finally, he held out his hands and said, “okay, one of my hands holds a clean bone and one of my hands holds a striped bone. The one who can guess which hand is holding the clean bone, deserves to be the leader of all of the creatures in the world”. Napi first went to the bear, “all you have to do is point to the clean bone”. One of the bears picked the clean bone, so they had all of the power of the creatures of the world. Then Napi went to the birds and said, “pick a hand”. The head bird picked the hand that held the clean bone, so now the birds are the leader of all of the animals in the world. Napi led the head bird to take the bones to the wolves. The head wolf chose the hand with the striped stick, so the wolves would not be the leaders of the world. Lastly, Napi led the lead bird to the mice. The head mouse made a choice of which hand might hold the clean bone. He too, chose the striped bone leaving the birds the winner of today’s competition and the leaders of all of the creatures in the world. They were given the power of leading all of the creatures of the world; remember they didn’t want that part, so they took it and gave it the only creatures humble enough not to be involved in the dispute. “Can you guess who that is? Humans. They are the only creature humble enough not to be involved in the dispute. We never would have won if we were involved and the mice saw that and gave us the power over the creatures in the world, for better or for worse, we have the power to care for the animals. We have zoos, we have farms, we have pets.

This story teaches us to take care of our animals. That is the story of Napi’s Hand Game. The game has been used to settle disputes for centuries.

