Earthquake Activity

Materials: blocks, Play-doh, cookie sheet or paper

Background Information: An earthquake is the sudden movement of the Earth’s tectonic plates, resulting in shaking of the ground. Earthquakes are measured using observations from seismographs. The magnitude of an earthquake and the intensity of shaking is usually reported on the Richter scale.

STEM Career Connection: Seismologists are scientists that study what is under the surface of the Earth by measuring vibrations on the Earth's surface. Engineers design buildings that are built to withstand the impact of an earthquake.


Challenge:
1. Gather materials.
2. Then create a building using the blocks. Create another building using Play Doh to connect the blocks.
3. Gently shake the cookie sheet or paper. Observe the results. Did the building stay together? Did the building have any damage? How can you create a building that will withstand an earthquake?
4. Create another building using different materials or a different shape. Move the cookie sheet or paper under the building again. Did your building stay standing? How was this design different from the first building? What kind of building was more stable - tall or short, wide or narrow.
5. Extension: How can you use your observations to design a building that would withstand the force of an earthquake? Make another building using other materials - stale marshmallows and toothpicks, playing cards, popsicle sticks, or anything else.