



## On Shaky Ground - Teacher Notes

The mechanisms that cause earthquakes are too complex to try and explain to Kindergarten age students but the effects of earthquakes can be explored in lots of fun ways. It is rare for us to experience strong earthquakes in Australia, due to our landmass not being located close to a tectonic plate boundary, however, some regions of Australia experience fairly regular earthquakes that can be felt.

A fun way to explore what happens in an earthquake is to look at how buildings and other structures behave. Students could build towers or bridges then they could be tested on a 'shake table'.

A shake table can be as simple as a large container of jelly - you may like to experiment with different ratios of jelly crystals to water to change the firmness of the set jelly. Other ideas for table design include using a large sheet of stiff cardboard positioned on top of some balloons anchored to a table or some firm springs sandwiched between wooden boards.

Buildings and bridges could be made from blocks, marshmallows and spaghetti, straws, biscuits or Lego. To test the structure design, place it on top of your shake table and give it a wobble! If the structure collapses, encourage students to think about how they might improve the design to make it stronger.

