



Greetings,

We are starting a new science unit in class called *How Can We Stay Safe on a Changing Earth?* The unit leads up to a science challenge where your child will solve the problem of choosing a site to build a mountain theme park by determining which of two sites is more at risk for landslides. Your child's at-home and out-of-school experiences can play an essential role in supporting the development of their own and their classmates' understanding of how the world works. As I work on planning the lessons, I would appreciate some ideas about how your child may have already experienced our new topic. Your feedback will help me incorporate their experiences into the unit.

Earth science contains many big topics, but your child may have some prior experiences at home or in their community that they can connect to these bigger ideas. If you can, please respond to as many of the following questions as you are comfortable answering. Rest assured that your child does not have to have relevant previous experiences to be successful with the unit.

1. Is your child familiar with any types of weathering or erosion in your community? This could include rain washing away soil in a yard or park, or trees breaking through the sidewalk.
2. What types of experiences does your child have with waves, such as in the ocean or a wave pool?
3. What types of experiences does your child have using maps? Do they notice patterns on those maps?

In addition to sharing your child's experiences with me, I encourage you to discuss topics related to this science unit with your child. This can help them make sense of what they are doing in school. Here are some examples of questions to ask at home:

1. Did you build a model of the Grand Canyon? What types of erosion cut through the layers of your model?
2. Did you use a computer simulation of a tsunami? What did it look like when it got to the shore?
3. Are you designing your own solution to prevent mudslides on a hill that was burned by a wildfire? Tell me about your solution. Why did you choose the design that you ended up with?

You can learn more about this science unit at [Science Education.si.edu/earth-evidence-phenomenon](https://ScienceEducation.si.edu/earth-evidence-phenomenon). Please feel free to ask me questions. I want to work with you to make sure your child gets the most out of this unit.

Thank you.