PARENT NOTES: Elastic Potential Energy!

SUPERHERO THROWING MACHINE

Today we put all our knowledge about levers, force and power together to build a catapult, and we learned that we could store potential energy in a stretched elastic band and then convert it to kinetic energy by letting it go! We may have changed the length of the lever by moving where the bottle top was on our catapult arm which would have changed how our projectile flew.

ASK YOUR CHILD

What did you make today?
(Catapult)

How far does it throw things?

What happens if you change the size or thickness of the elastic band?
(The projectile will fly either further or land closer depending on how much stretch there is in the elastic band)

What does adding the elastic band do?
(When you stretch the band backwards you store potential energy in the elastic band. When you let it go this is turned into kinetic energy which forces the catapult arm forwards and throws the projectile).