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Physics and Families: The Open Physics Lab and other experiences¹

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The Orlando Science Center has constructed a modern, computer assisted laboratory for physics experiments and demonstrations, that is accessible to the general public. It is equipped with a complete line of computerized data acquisition instruments, at the level of a modern university teaching laboratory, including both “wet” and “dry” lab capabilities. The project was designed to bring the experience of a “day in the laboratory” to the general public, consisting of a wide mix of people groupings, from individuals, to families, to school groups. We will discuss what works and does not work in a public setting, how the public reacts to a facility like this, and extensions to other fields of science.

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