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Supporting young children's capacity to develop scientific models and explanations in astronomy

This presentation will consider how programs in non-formal institutions can be used to support young children's engagement with astronomy using "practices of science," including the use of evidence to construct explanations and develop models. Young children are capable of participating in these practices, when supported by educators, when provided with appropriate materials, and when their use of gestures and drawings are recognized as components of these practices. I will discuss a framework for how educators can design programs that support young children in participating in these scientific practices while they explore astronomical phenomena in museums, science centers, and outreach events.