

# Karinna A. Rodriguez, PhD

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## EDUCATION

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**Florida International University**, Miami, FL

Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology, *Expected December 2025*

**University of North Florida**, Jacksonville, FL

M.S., Psychological Science, *May 2021*

**Florida State University**, Tallahassee, FL

B.S., Sociology & Psychology, *December 2017*

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

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**Graduate Researcher**, Project on Language and Spatial Development Lab, FIU

PI: Dr. Shannon Pruden | August 2021 – Present

- Designed and executed studies on children's spatial cognition and effort using eye-tracking and pupillometry.
- Supervised and mentored research assistants in data collection and statistical analysis
- Conducted mixed-method research strategies, including eye-tracking, pupillometry, surveys, and interviews to assess cognitive and behavioral responses in diverse populations.
- Translated complex and nuanced data findings into clear, engaging presentations for audiences across varying educational and professional backgrounds.
- Maintained collaborative and professional relationships with external partners across diverse sectors, including museums, companies, and academic researchers.

**Graduate Researcher**, Department of Psychology, UNF

PI: Dr. Susan Perez | August 2019 – May 2021

- Conducted behavioral analysis to identify psychological and sociocultural determinants of decision making.
- Developed and designed a behavioral coding scale to systematically measure parent–child interactions.
- Collaborated with interdisciplinary teams to refine methodologies and evaluate reliability/validity of study protocol
- Conducted large-scale developmental studies; facilitated survey administration with 20+ children per session

## PUBLICATIONS

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**Rodriguez, K. A.,** Ralph, Y. K., de la Rosa, I. M., Corro, O. P. P., Ochoa, C. D. R., & Pruden, S. M. (2025). Leveraging eye-tracking technology to understand how young children solve a mental rotation task. *Infant and Child Development*, 34(3).  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/icd.70018>

**Rodriguez, K. A.,** Mattox, N., Desme, C., Hall, L. V., Wu, Y., & Pruden, S. M. (2024). Harnessing technology to measure individual differences in spatial thinking in early

childhood from a relational developmental systems perspective. *Advances in Child Development and Behavior*, 67, 236-272. <https://doi.org/10.1016/bs.acdb.2024.07.008>

## PRESENTATIONS

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### Invited Talk

*Eye see what you think: Tracking spatial reasoning.* Frost NightLab at Phillip and Patricia Frost Museum of Science; Miami, Florida. (2025, July)

*Investigating spatial thinking with technology: A focus on eye-tracking data and mental rotation.* Psychological and Brain Sciences' Early Career Colloquium series at Johns Hopkins University; Baltimore, Maryland. (2025, April)

### Conference Presentations

Rodriguez, K. A., Beckner, A., Pruden, S. (2025, April) *Pupillometry as an Indicator of Perceived Difficulty in Children's Mental Rotation Tasks.* Poster Presentation at: Eye-Tracking Workshop for Developmental Scientists; Bloomsbury London

Rodriguez, K., Pruden, S. (2024, April) *Strategy in Sight: Eye-Tracking Children's Mental Rotation.* Flash Talk at FIU Psychology Department Research and Colloquium Day; Miami, FL

Rodriguez, K., Ralph, Y., de La Rosa, I., Pinto, O., Rey, C., Pruden, S. (2024, March) *Strategy in Sight: Eye-Tracking Children's Mental Rotation* Poster Presentation at: Southeastern Psychological Association 70<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting; Orlando, FL

Rodriguez, K., Ralph, Y., Pinto, O., Rey, C., Pruden, S. (2023, March) *Whatcha looking at? Eye-tracking children's mental rotation strategies.* Poster Presentation at: Society for Research in Child Development 2023 Biennial Meeting; Salt Lake City, UT

Rodriguez, K., Ralph, Y., Pruden, S. (2022, April) *Understanding Young Children's Mental Rotation Using Eye-Tracking.* Flash Talk at: FIU Department of Psychology Graduate Recognition Awards and Flash Talks; Miami, FL

Rodriguez, K., Ralph, Y., Pruden, S. (2022, April) *Understanding Young Children's Mental Rotation Using Eye-Tracking.* Poster Presentation at: Statewide Graduate Research Symposium; Orlando, FL

Rodriguez, K., Ralph, Y., Pruden, S. (2022, April) *Understanding Young Children's Mental Rotation Using Eye-Tracking.* Poster Presentation at: Graduate Student Appreciation Week Scholarly Forum; Miami, FL

Rodriguez, K., Perez, S. (2021, March) *Parental Influences and Age Differences on Children's Decisions Making.* Poster Presentation at: Southeastern Psychological Association; Orlando, FL via Online Portal

Perez, S., Schonning, A., Rogers, K., Rodriguez, K. (2020, August) *Is engineering for me? The effects of an outreach program on girls' interest in the pursuit of engineering.* Poster Presentation at: Society for Research in Human Development; Jacksonville, FL  
\*conference cancelled due to COVID19

## RESEARCH PROJECTS

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### **Dissertation Research – PI: Dr. Shannon Pruden, FIU**

*Pupillometry as an Indicator of Cognitive Effort* (2024 – Present)

- Using pupillometry as a measurement of cognitive effort applied during a mental rotate task to identify perceived task difficulty in children aged 3 to 7 years old

*Relation between strategy use, stimuli type, and mental rotation performance* (2024 – Present)

- Exploring potential factors that may predict performance on a mental rotation task

### **Master's Thesis – PI: Dr. Shannon Purden, FIU**

*Understanding young children's mental rotation using eye-tracking* (2021 –2023)

- Applied eye-tracking technology to determine the possible cognitive strategies children utilize during mental rotation tasks.

### **Master's Thesis – PI: Dr. Susan Perez, UNF**

*Parental influences on children's decisions-making* (2019 – 2021)

- Investigated sociocultural effects on child decision-making.
- <https://digitalcommons.unf.edu/etd/1028/>

## PROFESSIONAL HONORS AND AWARDS

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Dissertation Year Fellowship - \$20,000 (Fall 2025 – Spring 2026)

Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award Individual Predoctoral Fellowship to Promote Diversity in Health-Related Research (Parent F31-Diversity) - Administratively withdrawn (2025 cycle)

Psychology Department SEED Funding - \$2,000 (2025, 2022)

Best Thesis Award in College of Arts, Sciences, and Education, FIU (2024)

Psychology Department Flash Talk, 1<sup>st</sup> Place - \$300 (2024)

SEPA Graduate Student Research Award, 1<sup>st</sup> Place - \$200 (2024)

Psychology Department Flash Talk, 3<sup>rd</sup> place - \$150 (2022)

Statewide Graduate Research Symposium, 1<sup>st</sup> Place - \$200 (2022)

GSAW Scholarly Forum, 1<sup>st</sup> Place in Social and Behavioral Sciences - \$400 (2022)

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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### **Teaching Assistant, FIU**

- Research Methods I
- Research Methods II Lab
- Development of Children's Learning

### **Teaching Assistant, UNF**

- Experimental Cognitive Psychology
- Social Psychology
- Professional Opportunities
- Industrial Organizational Psychology

## CERTIFICATIONS

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- Cognitive Neuroscience – December 2024
- Sex as a Biological Variable Primer Training – March 2023
  - NIH Office of Research on Women's Health
- Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) – August 2019
  - Human Subjects Research Group 2 Social Behavioral Research Investigators and Key Personnel
- Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) – June 2017

## SERVICE

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- Mentor to Undergraduate Students  
Indrea Brooks (2025), Isabella de la Rosa (2022-2024), Claudia Rey Ocho (2021-2023), Oriana Pinto Corro (2021-2023)
- URInspiration Judge (2024)
- Presenter at Psychon (2022, 2023)
- Undergraduate Research Day Abstract Reviewer & Judge (2022, 2023, 2025)
- Secretary, Psychology Graduate Student Association (2023-2024)
- Take Your Child to Work Day Volunteer (2023, 2024)
- Psychology Graduate Student Association Mentorship Program (2022, 2023)

## MEDIA COVERAGE

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- *AI Corner: How Kids Think, and What Their Eyes Can Teach Us.*  
[frostsscience.org/ai-corner-how-kids-think-and-what-their-eyes-can-teach-us/](https://frostsscience.org/ai-corner-how-kids-think-and-what-their-eyes-can-teach-us/)
- *Building preschoolers' STEM skills is child's play.*  
[news.fiu.edu/2025/building-preschoolers-stem-skills-is-childs-play](https://news.fiu.edu/2025/building-preschoolers-stem-skills-is-childs-play)

## PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE

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**Scoring Intern**, Beacon Pediatric Behavioral Health Center, Jacksonville, FL  
September 2020 – May 2021

- Scored assessments (WISC-V, BASC-3, MASC-2, SRS-2, Vineland, Conners-3, WJ-IV)
- Entered results into reports, participated in case conceptualization meetings