

KARLA ESMERALDA PEREZ | perezke@stanford.edu

Areas of interest: cognitive development, computational social cognition

Education

Stanford University , Stanford, CA	9/2025 - current
Ph.D. in Psychology, focus on developmental cognition	
Lake Forest College , Lake Forest, IL	8/2019 - 5/2023
B.A. Philosophy & Data Science, <i>Magna Cum Laude</i>	GPA: 3.9/4.0

Research Experience

MIT: Early Childhood Cognition Lab (PI: Laura Schulz) **6/2023 - 9/2025**

Post-Baccalaureate Research Scholar

- Assisted in the development of a computational model of transient social connections and long-standing social relationships using gaze patterns, symmetry in patterns of mouth movements, and surprising events as predictors.
- Designed, coded, and animated an original game as an interactive research tool to study children's object-counting abilities and test our computational model of children's tracking across a range of layouts (lines, arrays, clustered groups, geometric forms, random scatters).
- Created and animated a 2D alien grid world to study the effect of social interaction on adults' world model building and explanation generation.
- Conducted experiments at the Boston Children's Museum on 4-7 year olds to study the effect of gender on functional fixedness.

Lake Forest College: RAD Lab (PI: Paul Henne) **06/2020 - 06/2023**

Research Assistant

- Primary data scientist: cleaned & analyzed data, visualized & reported results.
- Assisted with conceptual and methodological design of studies on causal reasoning.

University of Pennsylvania: Kable Lab (PI: Joseph Kable) **06/2022 - 08/2022**

Summer Research Assistant

- Employed mixed effects models on preliminary data for the study of dopamine and serotonin on persistence.

Papers

- **Perez, K.**, Siegel, M., Schulz, L., Tenenbaum, J., & Cheyette, S. (2024). Knowing what counts for counting [Manuscript in preparation]. Brain and Cognitive Sciences, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Henne, P., **Perez, K.**, & McCracken, C. (2024). No evidence that reversibility affects causal judgments in late-preemption cases. *Philosophical Psychology*, 1–12.
- Jonušaitė, I., **Perez, K. E.**, Siegel, M., & Schulz, L. (2024). Ad Hoc Theories: How Social Interaction Helps Us Make Sense of the World. *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society*, 46.
- Henne, P., Kulesza, A., **Perez, K.**, & Houcek, A. (2021). Counterfactual thinking and recency effects in causal judgment. *Cognition*, 212, 104708.

Talks

- **Perez, K.** (2023). The problem of consciousness. Steven Galovich Memorial Student Symposium, Lake Forest, IL.
- **Perez, K.** (2021). Action and intentionality. LFC Math Colloquium Works, Lake Forest, IL.
- **Perez, K.** (2020). Recency Effects in Causal Judgement. Richter Scholars Symposium, Lake Forest, IL.

Posters

- **Perez, K. E.**, Siegel, M., Coates, N., Tenenbaum, J., & Schulz, L. (2024). Knowing what counts for counting. [Poster presentation]. Cognitive Science Society, Rotterdam, NL.
- **Perez, K.**, Jonušaitė, I., & Schulz, L. (2023). Cooperative learning: Do interactions with others deepen our understanding of events? [Poster presentation]. Center for Brains Minds and Machines Summer Research Program Poster Session, Cambridge, MA.
- **Perez, K.**, van Geen, C., & Kable, J. (2022). Effects of dopamine and serotonin on persistence for delayed rewards in humans. [Poster presentation]. Student Research Symposium, Philadelphia, PA.
- Pedryc, W. & **Perez, K.** (2022). Abstract-concrete effect in causal judgement. [Poster presentation]. Chicago Brain Bee Symposium, Lake Forest, IL.
- Kulesza, A. & **Perez, K.** (2021). Counterfactual Thinking and Recency Effects in Causal Judgment [Poster presentation]. Robert B. Glassman Memorial Brain, Mind, and Behavior Symposium, Lake Forest, IL.

Fellowships & Grants

- 2025-28 **Stanford Knight Hennessy Scholars Fellowship**, Total Funding (TF): ~\$362,500.
- 2025-27 **Stanford EDGE Doctoral Fellowship**, TF: \$12,600.
- 2024 **MIT School of Science Quality of Life Grant** (& BCS/MIBR match), *BCS Research Scholars Seminar Series: Diversifying Perspectives in Science*, 9/2023-1/2025, co-author, TF: \$4,000.
- 2022 **NSF REU Site in Interdisciplinary Mind and Brain Studies at the University of Pennsylvania**, TF: \$6,000.
- 2021 **James Rocco Quantitative Research Fellowship at Lake Forest College**, TF: \$3,000.
- 2020 **Richter Scholar Summer Research Program at Lake Forest College**, TF: \$1,500.

Teaching

Teacher's Assistant at Lake Forest College	FALL 2021
Logic and Styles of Argument, Instructor: Dr. Paul Henne	
Introduction to Web Programming, Instructor: Dr. Zoya Mirza	
Swim Instructor at Wheeling Aquatic Center	2017-2020
Pre-school swim lessons (3-6 year olds); Swim school (6+ year olds)	

Mentorship, Leadership, & Outreach

Science Club for Girls	9/2024 - 2025
• Mentored 3rd graders: guided projects aimed at fostering confidence and literacy in STEM.	
Diversifying Perspectives in Science	9/2024 - 2025
• Programmed a workshop series to help historically underrepresented scholars in STEM integrate into the scientific community at MIT.	
The Great BCS Bake-Off	4/2024 - 2025
• Created a friendly, competitive environment to build stronger interpersonal connections within the department through monthly bake-offs.	
STEAM it UP	10/24/2024
• Assisted with demos for the K-8 outreach event hosted by the Cambridge STEAM initiative.	
RAD Lab Data Analysis Workshops	1/2022 - 6/2024
• Mentored lab members to build confidence with coding in R and data analysis.	

Skills

Languages: R, Python, JavaScript/CSS/HTML, Spanish

Online data-collection: Children Helping Science, JsPsych, Prolific, Qualtrics

skills continued...

Stimulus Development: Procreate, Adobe Premiere Pro, Keynote, Manim, Blender, Aseprite