

# AKIRA GUTIERREZ RENZULLI, Ph.D.

Founding VP, Research & Operations | EdTech & Youth Wellbeing Strategist | Applied Developmental Scientist  
akiragutierrezphd@gmail.com | youthappliedscientist.com | Atlanta, GA

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Strategic research and operations executive with a Ph.D. in Applied Psychology and 15+ years at the intersection of education, youth mental health, and organizational design. Proven track record building scalable EdTech infrastructure, leading research-practice partnerships, and translating behavioral science into tools that drive equity and outcomes for students and educators. Expert in child development, social-emotional learning (SEL), belonging, trauma-informed practice, and AI-enabled learning systems.

## SPECIALIZED SKILLS & COMPETENCIES

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- ◆ EdTech Research & Product Strategy
- ◆ SEL & Belonging Frameworks
- ◆ Research-to-Practice Translation
- ◆ AI & Learning Platform Evaluation
- ◆ Organizational Systems Design
- ◆ Equity-Centered Program Design
- ◆ Mixed-Methods Research Design
- ◆ Trauma-Informed Practice (K-12)
- ◆ Stakeholder Facilitation & Training

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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### Founding Vice President, Research & Operations *Feb 2026 – Present*

[Power Public Schools, LLC](#) | [Power Collective](#) | Atlanta, GA

- ▶ Strategic executive partner to Founder; own accountability structures, KPI tracking, and cross-initiative clarity for a nationally scaling EdTech organization.
- ▶ Architect and manage the end-to-end operating system (workflows, execution cadence, priorities) enabling rapid growth and global replication.
- ▶ Lead research agenda across AI agents, adaptive learning platforms, operational tooling, and educator training modules.
- ▶ Design scalable launch frameworks, playbooks, and toolkits that support replication of the Power model in new markets.

### Senior Research Associate *2023 – 2026*

[Education Development Center \(EDC\)](#) | Waltham, MA (Remote)

- ▶ Led evaluation and continuous quality improvement for equity-focused home visiting collaboratives and district-level Multi-Tiered Systems & Supports (MTSS) SEL and Suicide Prevention initiatives.
- ▶ Provided technical assistance to district leaders on multi-tiered suicide prevention systems; served as subject matter expert in youth mental health, SEL, and educator wellness.
- ▶ Developed and facilitated professional learning sessions on trauma-informed, equity-centered approaches for preK–12 education leaders (Social, Emotional, & Behavior Academy; Center for Early Learning Professionals; CASEL).

### Doctoral Researcher & McKnight Fellow — Applied Psychology *2019 – 2025*

[NAFASI Lab & School R.E.A.D.Y. Lab, Florida International University](#) | Miami, FL

- ▶ Conducted independently funded research on school belonging, ACEs, and culturally responsive SEL for Black and Latine youth; produced peer-reviewed publications and conference presentations.
- ▶ Developed intervention materials, observation tools, and culturally adapted SEL curricula for children and caregivers in clinical and school-based settings.
- ▶ Consulted on applications of implementation science to child and youth mental health services.

### Child Mental Health Clinician & Clinical Supervisor *2019 – 2022*

[FIU Center for Children & Families](#) / [FIU Summer Academy](#) | Miami, FL

- ▶ Delivered bilingual (English/Spanish) evidence-based assessment and treatment for youth with ADHD, mood, anxiety, and disruptive behavior disorders; supervised preschool summer treatment program staff.
- ▶ Supervised 15 treatment staff, led two-week protocol training, and set data-driven clinical goals for an early childhood behavioral intervention program.

**Senior Manager, Research-Practice Integration** 2016 – 2019**Transforming Education** | Boston, MA

- ▶ Managed Harvard Center for Education Policy & Research (CEPR) / MIT research-practice partnership across 6 Charter Management Organizations; translated findings into 5 white papers and 15+ educator toolkits, webinars, and PD resources.
- ▶ Facilitated multi-stakeholder symposia using SEL data to guide strategic planning for school partners.

**EDUCATION****Ph.D., Psychology** — Applied Social & Cultural Psychology 2025

Florida International University, Miami, FL | McKnight Doctoral Fellow (2019–2025)

**M.S., Psychology** — Clinical Science in Child & Adolescent Psychology

Florida International University, Miami, FL

**M.A., Applied Child Development** — Program Evaluation, Qualitative Methods, Cultural Competence

Tufts University, Medford, MA

**B.A., Child Development**

Tufts University, Medford, MA | Eliot-Pearson Dept. Prize (2006) | Early Childhood PreK–2 Licensure

**AWARDS & FELLOWSHIPS****McKnight Doctoral Fellowship:** Florida Education Fund, 2019–2025**FIU Provost Degree Completion Tuition Fellowship:** Florida International University, 2025**Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Development Prize:** Tufts University, 2006**AmeriCorps:** National Service, 2003**SELECTED PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS**

Goodman, A.C., Bryant, K., Schiavone, E., Ouellette, R.R., Gutierrez, A.S., et al. (2025). Knowledge Access to Action: Care Extender Models to Promote Youth Mental Health in Under-Resourced Schools. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health*, 1–21.

Gutierrez, A.S., Zambrana, K., Poznanski, B., Valdez, J., & Hart, K.C. (2024). Early life exposure to adversity and school readiness among preschoolers with disruptive behaviors. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*.

Hart, K.C., Poznanski, B., Gutierrez Renzulli, A., et al. (2024). Summer Treatment Program Model to Promote School Readiness in Young Children Living in Urban Poverty. *Evidence-Based Practice in Child and Adolescent Mental Health*.

Gutierrez Renzulli, A.S., Magariño, L., Fournier, R., & Frazier, S.L. (in revision). FACTS About Belongingness According to Elementary School Students. *Journal of Prevention & Intervention in the Community* (invited).

Gutierrez, A.S. & EDC (2024). Levers for Equitable Approaches to Promoting Belonging. CASEL SEL Exchange, Chicago, IL.

Gutierrez, A.S. (2019). Mindfulness in the Classroom: Learning from a school-based mindfulness intervention. ERIC (ED601227).

Lerner, R.M., Wang, J., Chase, P.A., Gutierrez, A.S., et al. (2014). Using relational developmental systems theory to link program goals, activities, and outcomes. *New Directions for Youth Development*, 2014(144).

**SKILLS & TOOLS****Research & Data:** SPSS, R, MPIus, NVivo, ATLAS.ti, Dedoose, REDCap, Qualtrics — quantitative, qualitative & mixed methods**EdTech & Operations:** AI agent evaluation, learning platform assessment, KPI frameworks, workflow design, playbook development**Platforms:** Microsoft 365, Google Workspace, Valant EHR**Languages:** English (native) | Spanish (native bilingual — spoken, reading, writing)**MEDIA & PRESS**

[K-12 Dive](#) (2024) · [Miami Herald](#) (2023) · [U.S. News & World Report](#) (2022) · [Telemundo 51](#) (2022)