The Sackler family has a long and significant involvement with psychiatry, beginning with Arthur, Mortimer, and Raymond, three brothers from Brooklyn who all became psychiatric researchers engaged in studying the psychobiology of mental illness. Their pioneering work was a powerful stimulus in the development of pharmaceutical solutions and the use of psychoanalysis as a more humane and effective treatment for those suffering from mental disorders than the harsher and more controversial treatments often used at the time.

Over the years, the brothers and their families initiated major research programs in the biomedical, biological, and physical and engineering sciences in leading academic institutions throughout the world, and became major philanthropists in the arts and sciences. In the 1980s, Dr. Mortimer D. Sackler and his family formed a strong relationship with Weill Cornell Medicine. With the goal of advancing existing knowledge in the areas of parenting and the social-emotional development of children in their formative years,

At the May 10th, 1999, dedication of the Sackler Institute for Developmental Psychobiology, Dr. Mortimer Sackler (left) is joined by his children, Mortimer D.A. Sackler, Dr. Kathe Sackler, and Ilene Sackler Lefcourt—Weill Cornell Medicine, Winter 2000
the Sackler Lefcourt Center for Child Development, established in 1982, partnered on a number of projects with Drs. Daniel Stern and Theodore Shapiro, prominent psychiatrists specializing in infant development at Columbia University and Weill Cornell Medicine.

The development of new sophisticated technologies, such as functional brain imaging, marked the possibility of better understanding mental illnesses through the study of objective biomarkers. Weill Cornell Medicine was the perfect setting in which major advances in the field of developmental psychobiology could be made: Dr. Robert Michels, then the Dean, was committed to supporting basic science; the Department of Psychiatry possessed adequate space for cutting-edge research, and the chair, Dr. Jack Barchas, had recently been recruited from UCLA where he was Dean for Research Development and Neuroscience, having previously directed the Pritzker Laboratory at Stanford.

Dr. Sackler and his family, particularly his daughters, Ilene Sackler Lefcourt and Dr. Kathe Sackler, were inspired by this opportunity to redefine how we study mental illness. Early discussions with the family and the Psychiatry faculty, especially Drs. Stern, Shapiro, and Barchas, with encouragement from Dr. Ethel Person, grew into an ambitious project, funded by the Sackler family, to create the first of seven institutes in the United States, Canada, and Europe devoted to developmental, psychodynamic, and psychoanalytic research.

The Sackler Institute for Developmental Psychobiology at Weill Cornell Medicine was officially founded on November 12, 1996. The founding director, Dr. Michael Posner, a pioneer in cognitive neuroscience, set out to create a highly collaborative scientific institute focused on human brain development, incorporating the techniques of brain imaging, human genetics, electrophysiology, and behavioral methods, and recruited two young investigators, Drs. BJ Casey and Bruce McCandliss, who would emerge as innovators in the field. At the Institute’s dedication, Dr. Mortimer D. Sackler expressed the hope that the Sackler Institute would also extend to developmental neurobiology, a hope that was subsequently realized.

In 2002, Dr. Casey took over as director of the Institute, and the Institute gained an international reputation for neurodevelopmental research and training using human imaging and mouse models to identify the role of developmentally sensitive periods and specific genes as first steps toward individualized and biologically targeted treatments for psychiatric disorders. In 2016, Dr. Francis Lee became the interim director of the Institute.

For the past 20 years, the Sackler Institute for Developmental Psychobiology and its Infant Psychiatry Program have been at the forefront of interdisciplinary neurodevelopmental research, training many residents, fellows, and psychology interns who have become distinguished investigators. The Institute is collaborative in nature and has cultivated partnerships with several groups at Weill Cornell Medicine, including the Feil Family Brain and Mind Research Institute, the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, the Center for Autism and the Developing Brain, and the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Bridging basic developmental research with clinical research, these partnerships have been the catalyst for novel research specific to personalized treatments for children within the entire spectrum of development.

Authors: Jack D. Barchas, MD, Robert Michels, MD, and Theodore Shapiro, MD
## Program

**Welcome**

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<td>9:00am–9:30am</td>
<td>Check-in and Coffee</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:30am–9:45am</td>
<td>Welcome Remarks</td>
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<td>Augustine M.K. Choi, MD</td>
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<td>Jack Barchas, MD</td>
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**Session I**

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<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:45am–9:55am</td>
<td>Bruce McCandliss, PhD</td>
<td>Extending Cognitive Neuroscience into Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:55am–10:15am</td>
<td>Kathleen Thomas, PhD</td>
<td>Long-term Effects of Early Experience on Cognitive and Brain Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15am–10:35am</td>
<td>Jason Zevin, PhD</td>
<td>The Development of the Attention Network Test</td>
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**Session II**

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:30pm–1:40pm</td>
<td>Dima Amso, PhD</td>
<td>Attention and Memory in Typical and Atypical Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:40pm–2:00pm</td>
<td>Nim Tottenham, PhD</td>
<td>Early Experiences and the Neurobiology of Emotion Regulation</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:00pm–2:20pm</td>
<td>Tobias Sommer, PhD</td>
<td>The Interdependence of Semantic and Episodic Memory</td>
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**Session III**

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<tr>
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<th>Speaker</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3:00pm–3:10pm</td>
<td>Rebecca Jones, PhD</td>
<td>The Developing Brain in Autism</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:10pm–3:30pm</td>
<td>Conor Liston, MD, PhD</td>
<td>Neuroimaging Biomarkers Define Neurophysiological Subtypes of Depression</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:30pm–3:50pm</td>
<td>Siobhan Pattwell, PhD</td>
<td>Leveraging Dynamic Changes in Neural Circuitry During Adolescence to Attenuate Fear Memories</td>
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**Closing Remarks**

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<tr>
<td>4:10pm–4:20pm</td>
<td>Francis Lee, MD, PhD</td>
<td>Closing Remarks</td>
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**Lunch**

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<tr>
<td>12:00pm–1:20pm</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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</table>
Michael I. Posner, PhD
Professor Emeritus, Department of Psychology, University of Oregon
Adjunct Professor of Psychology in Psychiatry, Weill Cornell Medicine

Dr. Michael Posner is currently Professor Emeritus of Psychology at the University of Oregon and Adjunct Professor at Weill Cornell Medicine. In 1996, he became the founding director of the Sackler Institute at Weill Cornell Medicine, a position he held until 2002.

For over fifty years, Dr. Posner has studied how mental operations, particularly those related to attention, are carried out by neural networks, using cognitive, imaging, and genetic methods. His work has relied upon neuroimaging technologies (e.g., PET and fMRI).

Dr. Posner’s research contributions to the area of attention, as well as related areas, have been widely recognized. He was appointed to the National Academy of Sciences in 1981 and later to the National Academy of Medicine and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences; he received the National Medal of Science from President Obama in 2009.

Dr. Posner’s current work examines the mechanisms of changes in white matter resulting from various forms of training. A mouse model together with optogenetic methods is being used to examine the general changes in learning and the reason for individual differences in changed connectivity.

BJ Casey, PhD
Professor of Psychology, Yale University
Adjunct Professor, Departments of Psychiatry and Neuroscience, Weill Cornell Medicine

Dr. BJ Casey is a Professor of Psychology and Director of the Fundamentals of the Adolescent Brain (FAB) lab at Yale University in New Haven and Adjunct Professor at Weill Cornell Medicine in the Departments of Psychiatry and Neuroscience and at The Rockefeller University in New York City. She completed her doctorate in experimental psychology at the University of South Carolina and completed her postdoctoral training at the National Institute of Mental Health. Dr. Casey is a world leader in human neuroimaging and its use in typical and atypical development. Over the past decade, she has gained international recognition for her empirical and theoretical work on the adolescent brain that have important implications for juvenile justice reform. Her discoveries, together with sophisticated animal studies, are providing new insights as to why young people experience and respond to the world in unique ways. This preclinical work is informing novel therapeutics for psychiatric disorders.

Dr. Casey serves on several national and international advisory boards and has received numerous honors and awards, including an honorary doctorate from Utrecht University and the Ruane Prize for Outstanding Achievement in Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Research. She has published 165 articles in prestigious journals, including; Science, PNAS, and Neuron, and her discoveries have been highlighted by NPR, Newsweek, The New York Times, National Geographic and PBS. Dr. Casey is someone who takes the training of the next generation of scientists as seriously as her own research, and this is reflected in the remarkable success of her many trainees.
Dr. Francis Lee is a pioneer in connecting molecular neuroscience with psychiatry by focusing on mechanistic studies of how growth and plasticity factors contribute to the pathophysiology and treatment of anxiety disorders. Using multi-level analyses of the first common human genetic variant in the neurotrophic factor, BDNF, his laboratory identified the precise trafficking defect imparted by this genetic mutation. Then, by generating and analyzing a humanized knock-in mouse model for the polymorphism, he, in collaboration with BJ Casey, was able to clarify and extend our understanding of complex phenotypes related to anxiety and fear-related phenotypes observed in humans with this genetic variant. In all, these studies delineate a shift in conceptualizing the in vivo function of this growth factor as one essential for regulating anxiety and fear-related functions during defined developmental periods.

Dr. Lee has served on several panels and boards at NIH and national mental health foundations, and has received numerous honors and awards, including the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE), the Burroughs Wellcome Clinical Scientist Award, and election to the National Academy of Medicine.
Session I

Jin Fan, PhD
Director of the Cognitive Neuroscience Laboratory
Professor of Psychology, Queens College, City University of New York

Dr. Jin Fan is a Professor of Psychology at Queens College (QC) of the City University of New York with part-time appointments in the Departments of Psychiatry and Neuroscience at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai (ISMMS). He received a bachelor’s degree in Physics from the Hebei Normal University in China, a master’s degree in Psychology from Peking University, a doctoral degree in Experimental and Quantitative Psychology from New York University, and did his post-doctoral training with Dr. Michael Posner at Weill Cornell Medicine.

Dr. Fan currently leads the Cognitive Neuroscience laboratory at QC and the Neuroimaging laboratory at ISMMS. His laboratories combine functional magnetic resonance imaging with event-related potentials, genetics, physiological monitoring, human lesion study, and computational modeling to investigate the neuroanatomy and circuitry of cognitive and affective control brain networks in healthy and neuropsychiatric populations such as autism spectrum disorder.

Bruce McCandliss, PhD
Professor, Department of Psychology, Stanford University

Dr. McCandliss studies developmental cognitive neuroscience, with an emphasis on questions of how the neural substrates of cognition change via learning and education. His laboratory employs several diverse techniques to investigate cognitive change across development and learning, including training studies in adults and children, longitudinal research in school-age children, naturalistic school-based studies, and observational and intervention studies. Cognitive domains of central interest include reading/language development, numerical/mathematical cognitive development, and domain-general attention abilities.

“My ten years at the Sackler Institute were formative to my career, and being a member of the Sackler Institute meant being part of a large interdisciplinary team that tackled a large range of applied issues from perspective of cutting edge theories and the latest technologies in brain imaging. Being part of a vigorous research group that had a shared vision of the importance of development in the lives of individuals gave a sense of purpose to my work that still motivates me today.”

After completing his PhD in Psychology with a focus in electrophysiology and cognitive neuroscience at the University of Oregon, he completed post-doctoral training in fMRI of reading and language development and intervention at the Center for the Neural Basis of Cognition, a joint program between Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Pittsburgh. In 1999,
he became an Assistant Professor of Psychology in Psychiatry at the Sackler Institute for Developmental Psychobiology, Weill Cornell Medicine. In 2009, he was granted an endowed professorship at Vanderbilt University, and named the Patricia and Rodes Hart Professor, where he founded the Educational Cognitive Neuroscience Laboratory. He is currently a Professor at Stanford University, where he is a member of the Department of Psychology, the Graduate School of Education, and a member of the Stanford Neuroscience Institute.

Tobias Sommer, PhD
Principal Investigator at the Department for Systems Neuroscience, University Medical School Hamburg-Eppendorf (UKE)

Following his studies in biology at the Christian-Albrechts-University in Kiel, Germany, Dr. Tobias continued his education at the Center for Molecular Neurobiology in Hamburg where he wrote his thesis on the interaction of potassium channel subunits. It was during this time that he realized that he was more interested in the systems level of neurobiology and psychobiology, and decided to take additional courses in psychology at the University of Hamburg. Subsequently, he spent one year at Weill Cornell Medicine’s Sackler Institute for Developmental Psychobiology as a visiting scientist. Under the supervision of Dr. Michael Posner, he wrote his second thesis about the genetics of attention. He later returned to Germany to pursue his PhD and work as a postdoc in the Department of Systems Neuroscience of the University of Hamburg, where he now serves as a principal investigator for the research group ‘Memory and Decision Making.’

Tobias Sommer

“My stay at the Sackler Institute with Mike Posner is clearly one of the most remarkable times of my life and had a lasting influence on my scientific career.”

Kathleen M. Thomas, PhD
Director of the Cognitive Development & Neuroimaging Lab
Professor of Child Psychology, Institute of Child Development, University of Minnesota

Dr. Thomas received her PhD in Child Psychology from the University of Minnesota with a minor in Neuroscience. She completed a postdoctoral fellowship in pediatric neuroimaging at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center under the mentorship of Dr. BJ Casey, and was an instructor and assistant professor at the Sackler Institute from 1999–2002 under the directorship of Dr. Michael Posner. Dr. Thomas moved to the University of Minnesota in 2002 where she is now Professor of Child Psychology.

Dr. Thomas’ research addresses the development and neurobiological correlates of learning, memory, and attention during childhood and adolescence. Her most recent grants address her long-standing interest in brain plasticity and the impact of early life experiences on the development of cognitive and emotion systems in the brain. She is currently applying behavioral and neuroimaging measures in early risk populations, including patients experiencing early deprivation, childhood maltreatment, or preterm birth.
Session II

Dima Amso, PhD
Associate Professor, Department of Cognitive, Linguistic, and Psychological Sciences, Brown University

Dr. Dima Amso has a BS in Psychology from Tufts University, was trained at Cornell University, and received a PhD in Psychology from New York University in 2005. She then joined the Department of Psychiatry faculty at Weill Cornell Medicine in the prestigious Sackler Institute for Developmental Psychobiology. Since 2010, Dr. Amso has been a member of the faculty of the Department of Cognitive, Linguistic, and Psychological Sciences at Brown University. Her research examines brain and cognitive development in typical and atypically developing populations, with a special emphasis on how environmental variables shape these trajectories. She has authored over 50 scientific publications on the topic and is on the editorial board of three international journals. Dr. Amso holds multiple awards from the National Institutes of Health and is a recipient of the James S. McDonnell Scholar Award.

Nim Tottenham, PhD
Associate Professor of Psychology, Columbia University

Nim Tottenham, PhD is an Associate Professor of Psychology at Columbia University. Her research uses fMRI and behavioral methods to examine human limbic-cortical development in children and adolescents to understand how early life experiences influence affective development. She is a recipient of the NIMH BRAINS Award, the APA Distinguished Scientific Award for Early Career Contribution to Psychology, and the Developmental Science Early Career Researcher Prize.

Nim Tottenham

“Being part of the Sackler Institute is being part of a family team that is dedicated to understanding human brain development.”

“I was first introduced to developmental psychobiology during graduate school at the University of Minnesota, and joining the Sackler Institute is where this interest developed into my lifelong career.”

“Developmental psychobiology is one of the fastest growing areas of science thanks to the collaboration between developmental science and emerging technologies.”

Jason Zevin, PhD
Associate Professor of Psychology and Linguistics, University of Southern California

Jason Zevin is Associate Professor of Psychology and Linguistics at the University of Southern California and Senior Scientist at Haskins Laboratories. His work combines behavioral, computational, and neuroimaging approaches to study basic mechanisms in reading and speech perception.

In research on reading, he has recently focused on asking whether the same functional architecture can be applied to understand reading in different orthographic systems. With respect to speech perception, he has studied the perception of speech contrasts by non-native listeners, and, increasingly, is trying to connect the difficulties observed in laboratory perceptual tests with online comprehension in more ecologically valid contexts.
Session III

Rebecca Jones, PhD
Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatry, Weill Cornell Medicine

Rebecca Jones, PhD is an Assistant Professor at Weill Cornell Medicine in the Department of Psychiatry. Rebecca studies social brain development in typical and atypical populations. Utilizing both behavioral and neuroimaging techniques, her research focuses on capturing developmental variations in children and adolescents with autism in order to identify predictors that can maximize treatment outcomes. A second area of her research is devoted to developing novel automated tools and the use of wearable devices to improve how autism symptoms are measured in both clinical and home settings. Rebecca has a BA from Princeton University, an MPhil from the University of Cambridge, and received her PhD in Neuroscience from Weill Cornell Graduate School of Medical Sciences.

Conor Liston, MD, PhD
Assistant Professor of Neuroscience, The Feil Family Brain and Mind Research Institute
Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, Weill Cornell Medicine

Dr. Conor Liston is Assistant Professor of Neuroscience, Brain and Mind Research Institute, and Psychiatry at Weill Cornell Medicine. He received his MD, PhD from the Tri-institutional MD-PhD Program (Weill Cornell/Rockefeller/ Sloan Kettering) working in the laboratories of BJ Casey (Sackler Institute) and Bruce McEwen (Rockefeller University), followed by psychiatry residency training at Payne Whitney Clinic, Weill Cornell Medicine. He completed postdoctoral training at the Skirball Institute, New York University, and Stanford University.

He directs a laboratory that operates at the exciting interface between systems neuroscience and biological psychiatry, and its mission is to define the circuit mechanisms by which neurons in the prefrontal cortex contribute to cognitive and emotional processes and to understand how they are disrupted in neuropsychiatric disease states. They are particularly interested in how stress, sleep, and other circadian rhythms interact to regulate synaptic remodeling in corticolimbic circuits, especially during adolescence and young adulthood, when major psychiatric disorders most commonly emerge. In the long-term, their work may facilitate the development of new treatment modalities and prognostic biomarkers derived from a systems-level understanding of circuit dysfunction in neuropsychiatric diseases.

Throughout his academic career, he has received numerous awards including recently the Klingenstein-Simons Fellowship Award in the Neurosciences and International Mental Health Research Organization Rising Star Award.

Siobhan S. Pattwell, PhD
Postdoctoral Fellow, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center

Dr. Pattwell received her PhD in Neuroscience at Weill Cornell Medicine in 2012. In 2013, she continued her work at the Sackler Institute, later embarking on a postdoctoral fellowship studying molecular genetics at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center. Having long been interested in the brain’s capacity for change, she is now utilizing genetic mouse models to explore both aberrant and normative neural plasticity surrounding developmentally regulated sensitive periods. By exploring the role of growth factor receptors in brain development, she hopes to gain a better understanding of what makes certain pediatric conditions—ranging from brain tumors to psychiatric illnesses—difficult to treat and often subsequently treatment-resistant. With this multi-faceted research approach employing behavioral and molecular neuroscience, cellular biology, and genetics, Dr. Pattwell’s overarching research goal is to not only better understand the developing brain, but ultimately to improve treatment outcomes for a wide range of pediatric and adolescent disorders.
1996–2002

Michael I. Posner, PhD

Professor Emeritus, Department of Psychology, University of Oregon
Adjunct Professor of Psychology in Psychiatry, Weill Cornell Medicine

1996

Michael Posner appointed Institute Director

1999

Recruitment of BJ Casey and Bruce McCandliss

2000

Hosted the start of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Initiative on Brain and Education

2001

Created a summary of the state of the art in the study of human brain development (Posner et al., Developmental Science, 2001)

2002

Developed the Attention Network Test to measure individual differences in three attention networks (Fan et al., Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience, 2002)
Examined adolescence as a distinct developmental stage given dynamic changes occurring in brain circuitry with important implications for treating the biological state of the developing brain. Examined adolescence as a developmental phase of enhanced sensitivity to the social environment and how environmental and genetic factors can impact this development. Identified how self-control and the underlying neural circuitry supporting this ability continue to develop well into the early twenties with implications for legal and social policy.

2002

BJ Casey appointed Institute Director

2008

$10 million NIMH P50 grant (PI: BJ Casey): “Impact of BDNF Genotypes and Stress on Learning and Brain Development”

2015

$10 million NIDA U01 grant (PI: BJ Casey): “Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Brain and Cognitive Development (ABCD)”

Children’s Health Council (CHC) Family Science Day on March 5, 2016

Conor Liston, MD, PhD; Cate Hartley, PhD; and BJ Casey, PhD
The Institute will support state-of-the-art interdisciplinary research in developmental psychobiology and its impact on the advancement of treatment modalities for developmental diseases by clinical and basic scientists. Specific studies include the following:

**Humans**

- **“Big data”-driven approaches** to developing neuroimaging biomarkers for reframing our current psychiatric diagnostic system, identifying novel subtypes of psychiatric disorders that emerge during the transition from adolescence to young adulthood, and targeting treatment strategies to the individuals most likely to benefit from them.

- **Broadening developmental neuroimaging studies** of impulse control during adolescence to include children, teens, and adults with autism to study whether teens with autism demonstrate increased impulsivity to motivational cues.

- **Integrative studies with the Center for Autism and the Developing Brain (CADB)** using wearable technologies to measure social communication in children, teens, and adults with autism in the home and the clinic to better assess treatment response.

**Animal Models**

- **Delineating neural circuit mechanisms** that support the development of cognitive control and the regulation of motivated behaviors, using novel optical technologies for visualizing and manipulating circuit function in animal models.

- **Expansion of early life stress studies** in rodent model systems by focusing on the impact of social influences on circuit level and molecular changes in the developing brain in collaboration with developmental scientists at Rockefeller University.
Sackler Advisory Board Members

Ilene Sackler Lefcourt  
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Vice Chair of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, Weill Cornell Medicine  
DeWitt Wallace Senior Scholar, Psychiatry, Weill Cornell Medicine
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Montreal, Quebec

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Scientific Director at the Ludmer Centre for Neuroinformatics and Mental Health at the Douglas Mental Health University Institute  
James McGill Professor, Departments of Psychiatry and Neurology and Neurosurgery  
Director, Program for the Study of Behaviour, Genes and Environment

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**Weill Cornell Medicine**  
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Mortimer D. Sackler, MD Professor of Molecular Biology in Psychiatry  
Professor of Neuroscience and Psychiatry
United Kingdom

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London, England

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Dr. Mortimer D. Sackler Chair in Translational Neurodevelopment
Professor of Psychiatry and Brain Maturation

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Associate Director of the Scottish Mental Health Research Network

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FOR
DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOBIOLOGY

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Ilene Sackler Lefcourt  Kathe A. Sackler, M.D.
Samantha Sackler Hunt  Mortimer D. A. Sackler
Marissa T. Sackler  Michael D. Saekler  Sophia D. Sackler

WEILL MEDICAL COLLEGE OF CORNELL UNIVERSITY
12 NOVEMBER 1996
Thank You!

Our deepest thanks to the entire Sackler Family for their 20 years of steadfast support.
Sackler Institute for Developmental Psychobiology

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