Leaders in childhood brain development to meet in New York for the Fifth Annual Aspen Brain Forum

Educators, psychologists, doctors, and academics will convene November 11 – 13 at the New York Academy of Sciences to focus on translating scientific research into improved developmental outcomes for at-risk children

NEW YORK, November 05, 2014 – The future success of a child is crucially dependent on the earliest stages of brain development. At this year's annual Aspen Brain Forum 'Shaping the Developing Brain: Prenatal Through Early Childhood', pioneers in neurodevelopment will explore how our recent understanding of an individual's brain growth, and the changes that take place in the womb and infancy, can profoundly affect long-term mental health, well-being, and cognitive ability.

With keynote address from **Thomas R. Insel,** MD, Director of the National Institute of Mental Health, the conference, co-presented by The Aspen Brain Forum Foundation, *Science Translational Medicine*, and the Academy, will focus on the connection between research and improved outcomes for children.

"As we increasingly view mental health illnesses as disorders of the brain, the science of neurodevelopment becomes fundamental for prevention and treatment. Specifically, by understanding the integrated developmental trajectories of brain and behavior, we can learn how, when, and for whom to intervene," says Insel, MD.

The conference will highlight successful translation of development research into educational practices, health and nutrition practices, applied research, and government policy for enhancing healthy brain development. Speakers will present ground-breaking discoveries from cognitive neuroscience and experimental psychology regarding typical and atypical development of early learning and memory, emotion, and social behavior. With the presence of educators and those involved with the day-to-day care of young children, the event will also explore socioeconomic, family, and other environmental factors that can affect the developing brain and interventions, based in science, that may successfully support children with or at risk of developmental delays and disorders.

"It is important that neuroscientists, academics, and educators are brought together by the Aspen Brain Forum to share new research and information on the most important years of a child's brain development. The Forum will allow us to focus on both a national priority and a huge global opportunity to improve the neurodevelopment of ALL young children," says Glenda Greenwald, President of the Aspen Brain Forum Foundation.

Conference highlights includes a public lecture, "Baby Talk: Closing the Achievement Gap, Word by Word," featuring a representative of the Clinton Foundation's Too Small to Fail initiative, and a special video address by **Hillary Rodham Clinton**. The parent-focused public lecture will share recent science on early language learning, and discuss how to improve the disparity between children born into lower socioeconomic households hearing far fewer words each day than those born into higher income households, leading to an approximately 30 million "word gap" by age three. Conference

sessions of interest include a dedicated 'Spotlight on Nutrition and Brain Development,' co-presented by the New York Academy of Sciences' Sackler Institute for Nutrition Science. The concluding panel discussion on 'How to Shape Policy to Address Multiple Adversities in Early Childhood Development,' will feature representatives from UNICEF, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the New York City Department of Education, and the President of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

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For more information about *Shaping the Developing Brain: Prenatal through Early Childhood Fifth Annual Aspen Brain Forum* visit: www.nyas.org/developingbrain

For press inquiries, including press passes to the event, please contact Stacy-Ann Ashley (sashley@nyas.org; 212-298-8696).

About the New York Academy of Sciences

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About the Aspen Brain Forum

The Aspen Brain Forum Foundation is a high-level think tank located in the retreat setting of Aspen, CO, with the mission of funding, producing, and hosting an annual meeting with our strategic partners the New York Academy of Sciences and *Science Translational Medicine* on cutting-edge topics in neuroscience to advance global collaboration and scientific breakthroughs. In 2012 Aspen Brain Forum began alliances with the American Brain Coalition, the American Brain Foundation and One Mind for Research, to enhance efforts to prevent and cure brain disorders such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, Autism, and Depression, within a decade. For more information, please visit www.aspenbrainforum.com.

About Science Translational Medicine

Science Translational Medicine, launched in October 2009, is the newest journal published by AAAS/Science. The goal of *Science Translational Medicine* is to promote human health by providing a forum for communicating the latest biomedical research findings from basic, translational, and clinical researchers from all established and emerging disciplines relevant to medicine. A major goal of *Science Translational Medicine* is to publish papers that identify and fill the scientific knowledge gaps at the junction of basic research and medical application in order to accelerate the translation of scientific knowledge into new methods for preventing, diagnosing, and treating human disease. For more information, please visit http://stm.sciencemag.org.