In my talk I will focus on two domains that allow humans to care for others and cooperate, namely empathy and morality. I will start with two studies focusing on the development of empathy in infancy, and its relation to prosocial behavior. Then, I will present results on the neural correlates of fairness evaluations in 5-year-olds. Finally, I will talk about the moral self-concept – that is, how central morality is to someone’s sense of self. In particular, I will focus on two aspects: the emergence of the moral self-concept and its relation to prosocial behavior in preschool years; and the relationship between moral self-concept and neural processing of social content in middle childhood and adulthood. Taken together, my results will provide a picture on what leads human to behave in a caring and prosocial way during the development, starting from empathic reactions towards a suffering other, moving through normative expectations about fairness, and ending with the interiorization of moral norms in one’s own identity.

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This colloquium lecture takes place at Liebigasse 5, 1010 Wien; Lecture Hall G AND online!
Thursday, October 21, 2021; 3 pm