

A close-up photograph of a brown puppy with floppy ears, sleeping peacefully on a light-colored carpet. The puppy's eyes are closed, and its head is resting on the floor. A red collar is visible around its neck.

Puppy Development: Application

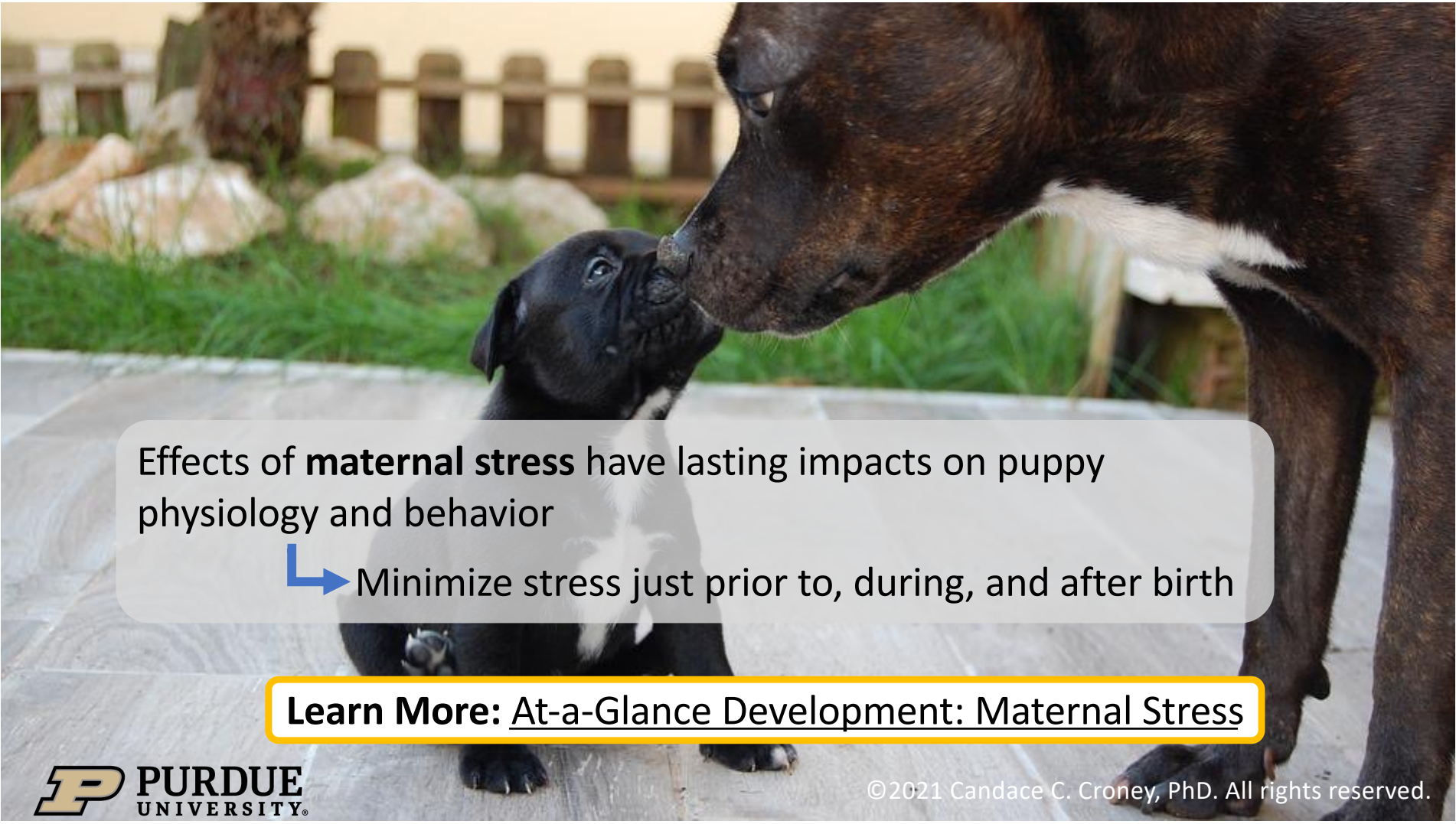
Croney Research Group

A close-up, slightly out-of-focus photograph of a small, fluffy puppy with brown and white fur, looking towards the camera. The puppy is positioned in the center-right of the frame. The background is dark and blurry, suggesting an indoor setting with some light sources.

Understanding Puppy Development Matters for Dog Welfare

Allows caretakers to:


- Provide conditions that facilitate normal development and prevent problems
- Recognize problems and effectively intervene
- Informs management practices for the entire breeding career of the dog



Effects of **maternal stress** have lasting impacts on puppy physiology and behavior

↳ Minimize stress just prior to, during, and after birth

Learn More: [At-a-Glance Development: Maternal Stress](#)



Quality **maternal care** is important for healthy puppy development

- Set dams up to successfully care for their puppies
- Monitor and track maternal care behavior and intervene as needed


Learn More: [At-a-Glance Development: Maternal Care](#)



Early puppy care practices greatly impact adult behavior

- Provide early neurological stimulation (ENS) as indicated
- Provide ample socialization and enrichment opportunities for puppies beginning at 3 weeks of age
- Provide human social support during any brief separations from the dam and litter

Learn More: [At-a-Glance Development: ENS](#)

A photograph of three black puppies on a green lawn. One puppy is lying down in the foreground on the left, looking towards the right. Two other puppies are standing behind it, one in the center and one on the right, both looking towards the camera. The background is a blurred green lawn and a stone wall.

Developmental stages occur in a predictable sequential order that indicates physical, emotional, and behavioral development

- ↳ Consider when caring for dogs and assessing dog behavior
- ↳ Continue to monitor development and use to inform practices throughout puppyhood and beyond

Learn More: [At-a-Glance Developmental Stages](#)



Remember:

- Adhere to the instructions for frequency and duration of ENS exercises
- Assess puppy behavior, not only chronological age, to gauge developmental stage
- Developmental stage impacts the behavior of puppies

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Remember:

- Provide socialization and early exposure slowly and gradually to avoid inadvertently scaring puppies
- To handle with care during fear periods when socializing or exposing puppies to new experiences
- To keep puppies with their litter until eight weeks of age

FAQ

Are puppies impacted by their mother's experiences prior to whelping?

Yes!

- There is evidence that what puppies are exposed to in the womb can impact their later behavior
- Maternal stress alters the environment in which the puppies develop, with implications for their physical and behavioral welfare



Learn More:

- [At-a-Glance Developmental Stages](#)
- [At-a-Glance Development: Maternal Stress](#)
- [At-a-Glance Development: ENS](#)
- [At-a-Glance Development: Maternal Care](#)
- [Early Neurological Stimulation \(ENS\): Implications for canine welfare and management](#)
- [Implications of weaning age for dog welfare](#)



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