

A black and white dog is captured in mid-air, jumping over a thick, horizontal tree branch. The dog's front legs are extended forward, and its body is arched over the branch. The background is a blurred forest with trees and fallen leaves, suggesting an outdoor, natural environment. The dog has a white face and chest with black patches on its body and ears.

Environmental Enrichment: Application

Croney Research Group



Enrichment is...

- Any change to the dog's environment that results in positive outcomes and improved quality of life
- Providing positive exposures to a variety of animals, people, objects, and activities to meet the dog's behavioral needs

Learn More At-a-Glance: [Enrichment Types](#)

A photograph of two golden retrievers on a grassy field. One dog is on the left, looking towards the right, and the other is on the right, looking towards the left. They appear to be sniffing each other. The background is a blurred green lawn.

Benefits for Dogs

- Improved or enhanced welfare
- Provides mental and physical stimulation
- Allows for outlets to engage in species typical behaviors
- Decreases risk for abnormal behavior

Learn More At-a-Glance: [Enrichment, Stress, and Improved Welfare](#)



Benefits for Caretakers


- **Rewarding-** many caretakers report that they enjoy watching their dogs engage in enrichment activities
- **Easier to provide care**
 - **May decrease undesirable behaviors** (e.g., barking, overactivity, pacing, fear and aggression)
 - **May increase desirable behaviors** (e.g., playing, socializing, resting)

©2021 Candace C. Croney, PhD. All rights reserved.

Who Should Receive Enrichment?

**Important for
all dogs!**

- All ages
- All breeds
- Both sexes



Enrichment Tip #1

Make sure activities
and items are:

Safe!

- Clean
- Indestructible
- Healthy
- Well-matched
play groups

Enrichment Tip #2

Make sure activities and items are:

Novel!

- Rotate items often
- Offer a variety of items, activities, foods, social partners

Enrichment Tip #3

Make sure activities and items are:

Enriching and positive!

- Experiences should not be negative or neutral for the dog
- Dogs must engage with the item or experience for it to be enriching



Enrichment Tip #4

Make sure activities and items are:

Tailored to the individual!

- Each dog will have unique preferences
- Each dog will have unique abilities
- Very old or very young dogs may have special considerations





Enrichment Tip #5

Make sure activities and items are:

Chosen by the dog!

- Offering options will increase their engagement



Be Careful to Avoid:

1. Giving items that are not safe (examples: hazardous, dirty, non-digestible that can cause intestinal blockage, sharp, unsafe heights)
2. Giving an item and leaving without monitoring first interaction for safety and success
3. Providing items that the dogs feel neutral or negative about
4. Failing to rotate items in the environment/no novelty
5. Only providing one category of enrichment

Be Careful to Avoid:

6. Inadvertently promoting high arousal and frustration
7. Creating increased competition and resource guarding
8. Positioning play/exercise areas in view of dogs restricted to pens
9. Poorly-matched play groups (e.g., dogs with different play styles)



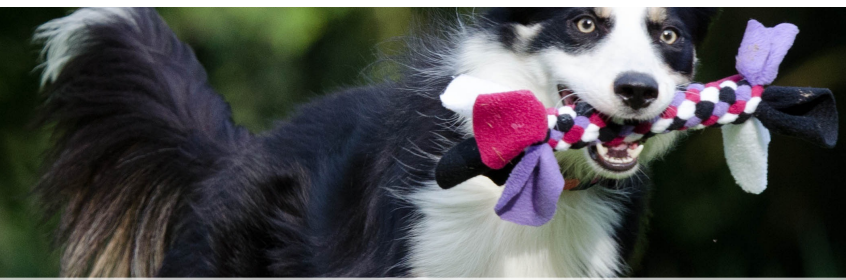
FAQ #1

How can I manage all of this?

- Incorporate enrichment into other activities such as exercise and positive caretaker interactions
- Create an enrichment cart with clean items that you can push through the kennel for rotation of toys and chews
- Create stations for easy clean up including soaking buckets and brushes
- Design kennels that make it easy to reach and exchange enrichment items
- Utilize logs to track each dog's experiences

FAQ #2

Provide enrichment beyond puppyhood

A black and white dog, possibly a Border Collie, is shown in profile, facing right. It is holding a colorful, knotted toy in its mouth. The toy has purple, red, and white sections. The dog is standing on a green lawn with a blurred background of trees and foliage.

All puppies and **all adult dogs** in the kennel need environmental enrichment. Rehomed dogs should also continue to receive enrichment in their new environments. Share each dog's individual preferences with their new families when rehoming to support success in their new homes



Learn More:

- [Enrichment in Kennels Handout](#)
- [Quick Tips for Success: Environmental Enrichment in Kennels](#)
- [Canine Environmental Enrichment Log Handout](#)
- [The role of caretaker interactions in environmental enrichment for kennelled dogs](#)
- [Implementing Environmental Enrichment for Dogs](#)
- [At-a-Glance: Enrichment Types](#)
- [At-a-Glance: Enrichment, Stress, and Improved Welfare](#)



Authors:

Taylor Rezvani, PhD, Traci Shreyer, MA, Candace Croney, PhD

©2021 Candace C. Croney, PhD. All rights reserved.