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**Critical Periods in Puppy Development and Associated Trauma**

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Critical periods in puppy development are specific windows of time during which a puppy's brain and behavior are highly sensitive to certain types of experiences. These periods are essential for proper social, emotional, and cognitive development and play a crucial role in shaping a dog's behavior and temperament as an adult.  
  
Understanding critical periods in puppy development and associated trauma can help pet owners and trainers understand and provide appropriate care to puppies during all of their developmental stages. These critical periods are stages in a puppy's life when their brain and body are rapidly developing and changing, and experiences during these times can have a lasting impact on their behavior and personality.

For example, the socialization period that occurs between 3 and 14 weeks of age is a critical time when puppies need to be exposed to a variety of people, animals, and environments where they learn how to interact and adapt to their surroundings. Failure to expose puppies to these experiences during this period can lead to socialization problems, fear, and aggression.

A critical period is a specific time in the maturation process when a small amount of experience will produce a great effect on later behavior(1).  It's also a period when learning is easier and knowledge gained is stored in the long term memory. The difference between the amount of effort needed to produce the same effect at different periods determines just how critical the period is.  There is a window of opportunity in which certain experiences need to happen at a specific time, or the window will close and the potential benefits of those experiences will be lost.

Understanding critical periods can help to shape the character traits of individual puppies so that they can achieve the highest adaptability potential.

**Prenatal Trauma**

Prenatal trauma in dogs refers to any adverse experience or event that a pregnant dog undergoes, which may affect the development of her puppies. This could include physical trauma, exposure to toxins, stress, or any other factor that may have an impact on the health and well-being of the developing fetuses.

Research suggests that prenatal stress can affect the behavior, physiology, and brain development of offspring in many species, including dogs. Stressful experiences during pregnancy can lead to changes in the hormonal and neurochemical balance of the mother, which can affect the developing puppies.

Some potential consequences of prenatal trauma in dogs include:

1. **Increased risk of developmental disorders:** Prenatal stress may increase the risk of developmental disorders such as anxiety, aggression, and other behavioral problems in puppies.
2. **Lowered immune function:** Prenatal stress can also impair immune function, which may leave the puppies more susceptible to infectious diseases.
3. **Poorer growth and development:** Puppies born to stressed mothers may have slower growth and development than puppies born to unstressed mothers.

Normally, puppies are shielded from the effect of stress hormones courtesy of a special enzyme that inactivates them at the level of the placenta.

However, when the levels of the dog's cortisol, a hormone released in response to stress, are consistently high, some manages to seep through the placenta with the end result of reaching the developing fetuses.

What does this mean to the puppies? It means that the puppies "learn" that the world is a scary place to be and their bodies develop an appropriately tuned stress system and metabolism, explains veterinarian [Jessica Hekman](http://www.whole-dog-journal.com/issues/17_11/features/How-a-Mothers-Stress-can-Influence-Unborn-Puppies_21078-1.html).

**The Effects on Puppies**

When a mother dog experiences stress, her body reacts by releasing stress hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline. These hormones are important in helping the dog cope with the stressful situation, but they can also have negative effects on the body, particularly on the digestive system.

As the stress [hormones are released](https://organismalbio.biosci.gatech.edu/chemical-and-electrical-signals/animal-hormones/), the body redirects energy away from digestion and storage processes. This means that the food the mother dog eats may not be properly digested, and the nutrients from the food may not be effectively absorbed and stored in the body. This can lead to a decrease in overall energy available to support the growth and development of the puppies.

The growth and development of puppies in the womb depend on a consistent supply of nutrients and energy from their mother. When the mother dog experiences stress, the supply of energy may be disrupted, which can impact the proper growth and development of the puppies. This can result in the birth of smaller puppies who may have lower birth weights and be more vulnerable to health issues.

It is important for mother dogs to be in a stress-free environment during pregnancy and to receive proper nutrition and care to support the healthy development of their puppies. [Adequate nutrition](https://vcahospitals.com/know-your-pet/feeding-the-nursing-dog) and a calm, supportive environment can help ensure that the puppies are born healthy and able to thrive.

On top of that, prenatal stress in mother dogs may lead to long-lasting alterations in the brain structures of the developing puppies leading to behavioral deficits that are similar to those observed in schizophrenic humans, explains board-certified veterinarian [Franklin D. McMillan.](http://www.wp.iafriends.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/4_TheHarmfulEffectsOfPuppyMillsonBreedingDogs.pdf)

Once born, the puppies are predisposed to anxiety and are particularly vulnerable to the effects of stress as they have an impaired ability to cope and adapt to the challenges, threats, and adversity they may encounter throughout their lives.

*Scientific research suggests puppies born to dams who have experienced acute or chronic stress during their pregnancy are more likely to show retarded motor & learning development and abnormal exploratory, play, social, sexual and maternal behavior. ~Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors*

**Birth**



**Neonatal Period (0-12 Days):**

The critical period neonatal period in puppy development is the first 12 days after birth. During this time, the puppies are very vulnerable and require close attention and care from their mother and owner. It is a crucial period for their development as it sets the foundation for their future growth and behavior.

However, this period is also associated with potential trauma that can affect the puppy's development in the long run. Trauma can occur due to various reasons such as handling, improper feeding, exposure to loud noises, and mishandling by humans or other animals. Trauma can lead to various developmental problems like aggression, anxiety, and fear.

To avoid trauma during the critical period neonatal period, it is essential to take the following precautions:

1. **Handling**: Puppies should be handled with care during this period. They should not be squeezed or handled too roughly, as it can cause injury.
2. **Feeding**: Puppies should be fed every 2-3 hours.
3. **Feeding orphaned puppies:** The milk temperature should be maintained at approximately [100 degrees Fahrenheit](https://vcahospitals.com/know-your-pet/feeding-orphaned-puppies). Overfeeding can cause digestive problems, and underfeeding can lead to weakness.
4. **Exposure to loud noises**: Puppies should be protected from loud noises during this period, as it can lead to stress and trauma.
5. **Mishandling**: Puppies should be protected from rough handling by other animals or humans during this period.

In addition to avoiding these potential sources of trauma, exercises can also be done to stimulate the puppy's development during this period. These exercises can include gentle massage, passive range of motion exercises, and simple movements like gently moving the limbs to improve muscle tone and flexibility.

**In conclusion, the critical period neonatal period is an essential time for puppy development, and it is essential to take care to avoid trauma and engage in exercises that can promote healthy growth and development. By doing so, puppies can have a better chance of growing up to be well-adjusted and happy dogs.**

**Related Traumas:**

Puppies abruptly weaned between the ages of  
10 and 18 days might show

* sucking tendencies on blankets or
* later, they are likely to get mouthier when needing attention.
* Feeling unsafe and scared of the environment.

**TIP:** Secure attachment is a crucial factor when it comes to resetting a dog's trauma, particularly in puppies who have experienced early trauma. Secure attachment involves establishing a strong and positive relationship between the puppy and its caregiver, based on trust, consistency, and responsiveness. When a puppy experiences trauma, it can disrupt the normal development of attachment and bonding, leading to fear, anxiety, and other behavioral issues.

By focusing on building a secure attachment, you can help a traumatized puppy feel safe, supported, and loved. This involves providing plenty of positive interactions, such as playtime, grooming, and training, as well as meeting the puppy's basic needs for food, water, and shelter. You can also work with a professional dog trainer or behaviorist to develop a plan that addresses any specific behavioral issues the puppy is experiencing as a result of its trauma.

It's important to note that the process of resetting a dog's trauma is not always easy, and may require time, patience, and ongoing support. However, by prioritizing secure attachment and working with a knowledgeable professional, you can help the puppy recover from its early trauma and develop into a happy, healthy, and well-adjusted adult dog.



**Parent Imprint Period (13 Days - 5 weeks):**

The critical period parent imprint period (filial imprinting) is a crucial stage in puppy development that occurs between 13 days to 5 weeks of age. During this time, puppies form an attachment to their mother and littermates and learn important social and behavioral skills that will shape their future interactions with other dogs and humans. However, this period is also associated with trauma that can have long-lasting effects on a puppy's mental and emotional well-being.

One of the most significant types of trauma that can occur during the critical period parent imprint period is attachment trauma. This can happen when a puppy is separated from its mother and littermates too early or is not properly socialized with other dogs and people. As a result, the puppy may develop separation anxiety, fearfulness, and other behavioral problems that can make it difficult to form healthy relationships with humans and other dogs later in life.

To help prevent trauma during the critical period parent imprint period, it's important to avoid certain exercises that can be stressful or overwhelming for puppies. These include:

1. Rough play: Puppies should not be encouraged to play roughly or aggressively with elder dogs or humans, as this can lead to fearfulness and aggression.
2. Loud noises: Loud noises such as vacuum cleaners, fireworks or thunderstorms can be terrifying for puppies, so it's important to keep them in a quiet and safe environment during these events.
3. Being left alone for long periods: Puppies should not be left alone for long periods, as this can lead to separation anxiety and other behavioral issues.
4. Overstimulation: Puppies should be exposed to new experiences and environments gradually, so as not to overwhelm them and cause anxiety.

In conclusion, the critical period parent imprint period is a critical stage in puppy development that requires careful attention and care. By avoiding exercises that can cause trauma and taking steps to gradually desensitize, socialize and interact your puppy properly, you can help ensure that your furry friend grows up happy and healthy

This Imprinting is important for raising the young, as it encourages them to follow their parents and learn the basic survival skills. This is referred to as "filial imprinting." For example, in the wild, animals learn to hunt while watching their parents hunt. The primary function of imprinting, however, is to enable the young animal to recognize its own mother from among the other adults of its species. That does not mean that the imprinting period will override the genetically imprinted species behavior.

**Related Trauma:**

feeling unprotected and unsafe in a considerable safe place. The critical thing here is that puppies learn a sense of nurturing and safety; they blindly follow who is next to them that is bigger. Accidents may happen but the parent response towards the puppy is what makes the event good or bad. Failing to respond causes permanent trauma - everything is unsafe.

**Behaviors:**

Usually hit the max at around 6 months:

* excessive barking day and night
* struggles with boundaries
* chasing everything that moves towards the dog
* jumping onto people and knocking them down but also humping.

**Awareness Period (21 - 28 Days):**

The Critical Period Awareness Period, which typically occurs between 21 and 28 days after birth, is a crucial stage in the development of puppies. During this time, puppies start to become aware of their surroundings and begin to form their own identities. It is also a time when puppies are particularly vulnerable to trauma, both physical and psychological, which can have lasting effects on their behavior and emotional well-being.

One of the most common forms of trauma during this period is attachment trauma. This occurs when puppies are separated from their mothers and littermates too early or too abruptly, which can cause them to feel anxious and insecure. This, in turn, can lead to a host of behavioral issues, such as separation anxiety, fearfulness, and aggression.

To avoid such trauma during the Critical Period Awareness Period, it is important to provide puppies with a nurturing and stable environment. This includes:

1. Keeping puppies with their mother and littermates until they are at least eight weeks old.
2. Providing a clean and comfortable living space that is free from stressors such as loud noises or bright lights.
3. Introducing puppies to a variety of people and experiences in a gentle and positive way, to help them develop socialization skills.
4. Encouraging play and exercise, which can help puppies build confidence and develop physical and mental strength.
5. Avoiding any form of punishment or negative reinforcement, which can damage the bond between puppies and their caregivers.

Overall, the Critical Period Awareness Period is a critical time for the development of puppies, and it is important to take steps to ensure that they are able to thrive and develop into healthy, well-adjusted dogs. By providing a stable and nurturing environment, and avoiding trauma and stress, we can help our puppies to grow into happy and confident companion.

**Related trauma:**

During the Awareness Period, some of the potential traumas that dogs can experience include:

1. **Attachment trauma:** This occurs when puppies are separated from their mothers and littermates too early or too abruptly, which can cause them to feel anxious and insecure.
2. **Separation anxiety:** Puppies can become overly attached to their owners during this period, which can lead to separation anxiety when they are left alone.
3. **Fearfulness:** Dogs may develop a fear of certain people, objects, or situations if they are exposed to them in a negative way during this period.
4. **Aggression:** If puppies are exposed to aggressive behavior or violence during this period, they may develop aggressive tendencies themselves.
5. **Physical trauma:** Puppies are still developing their coordination and motor skills during this period, which can make them vulnerable to injuries.



**Canine Socialization Period (21 - 49 Days):**

Emotional development Interacting with his mother and littermates, the pup learns various canine behaviors. This is a good time to wean the puppy off and start solid food (raw or good quality commercial food.  Puppy is now aware of the differences between canine and human societies, learns to call for help and avoid unpleasant situations that are unknown without sounding alarmed. There is no fear response developed yet, rather discomfort like/dislike response. We can suppose that this is the period when complete cortical connections are established with the hypothalamus. This period from 3 to 7 weeks is an especially sensitive one for emotional reactions, which correspond to the observation of overt behavior. We might also speculate that, since the cortex is not completely developed, emotional reactions during this time might be less permanently learned. However, the basic connections have been established and the emotional recording begins.

Here are some ways to avoid trauma in dogs during the Canine Socialization Period:

1. **Provide a safe and secure environment:** During this period, puppies need a secure and stable environment that is free from any kind of danger or threat. Make sure that the puppy's living area is clean, comfortable, and safe.
2. **Socialize your puppy:** Introduce your puppy to a variety of people, animals, and environments. This will help your puppy become familiar with different situations and develop social skills.
3. **Positive reinforcement:** Use positive reinforcement techniques like treats and praise to encourage good behavior in your puppy. Avoid using punishment or negative reinforcement as this can cause trauma and fear in the puppy.
4. **Provide opportunities for play:** Playtime is important for a puppy's emotional development. Encourage playtime with other puppies of the same age and provide toys that are safe and appropriate for their age.
5. **Monitor interactions:** Supervise interactions between your puppy and other dogs to ensure that they are positive and safe. Remove your puppy from any situation that is stressful or overwhelming.
6. **Avoid stressful situations:** During this period, puppies are highly sensitive and can easily be overwhelmed by stressful situations. Avoid exposing your puppy to loud noises, crowded areas, or other stressful situations that can cause trauma.

By following these tips, you can help your puppy develop emotionally and avoid trauma during the Canine Socialization Period. Remember to always provide a safe and secure environment and to use positive reinforcement techniques to encourage good behavior.

**Related Trauma:**

During the Canine Socialization Period (21-49 Days), there are potential traumas that dogs may experience. These traumas can have lasting effects on the emotional development and behavior of the dog.

1. **Separation from mother and littermates:** If a puppy is separated from its mother and littermates too early, it may experience anxiety and socialization problems. This can lead to fearfulness, aggression, and other behavioral issues later in life.
2. **Lack of socialization with humans and other dogs:** If a puppy is not properly socialized with humans and other dogs during this period, it may develop a fear of people and other dogs. This can lead to aggression, anxiety, and other behavioral problems.
3. **Traumatic experiences:** Traumatic experiences such as being attacked by another do, or lactating stressed mother. Puppies may become fearful or aggressive towards other dogs or people, and may develop anxiety or other behavioral issues.
4. **Lack of exposure to different environments:** If a puppy is not exposed to different textures, noises, and environments, such as busy streets, parks, or other social situations, it may become fearful or anxious when faced with these situations later in life.

**Human Socialization Period (7 to 12 Weeks):**

The pup starts developing brainwaves as an adult dog. This is the best time for going to a new home. He now has the ability to learn respect, simple behavioral responses: sit, stay, come. Housebreaking begins. He now learns by association. The permanent human/dog bonding begins, and he is able to accept gentle discipline and establish confidence.

**Related Trauma:**

During the Authority Imprint period, dogs may develop various traumas if they are exposed to negative or frightening experiences. Some of the common traumas associated with this period include:

1. **Separation anxiety**: Separation anxiety may develop if the puppy is taken away from his mother and siblings before the age of eight weeks. This can lead to excessive barking, destructive behavior, and other issues when the dog is left alone.
2. **Fear of humans:** If the puppy is exposed to harsh or abusive treatment from humans during this period, he may develop a fear of humans that can last a lifetime. It is important to introduce the puppy to other humans during this period, but they should be closely supervised to prevent any negative experiences.
3. **Fear of loud noises:** If the puppy is exposed to loud noises such as, Flying in cargo, shelter, fireworks or thunderstorms during this period, he may develop a fear of these noises that can last a lifetime. It is important to expose the puppy to a variety of noises, but they should be introduced gradually and with positive reinforcement.
4. **Fear of other dogs:** If the puppy is not socialized with other dogs during this period, he may develop a fear of other dogs that can make him aggressive or anxious around them.
5. **Trauma from accidents:** Accidents such as falling, being stepped on, or getting caught in a door can be traumatic for a puppy during this period and may lead to fear or anxiety around certain situations or objects.

***Note: Adoption and transport can cause: abandonment trauma, grief, and Sensitivity to noise and motion due to transportation, Kennel aggression.***



**Authority imprint (FIRST fear) Period (8 - 11 Weeks):**

The first fear imprint period occurs at approximately eight to ten weeks of age. In the wild, this would have been the time when the pups first ventured outside the safety of their family’s protection.

Try to avoid frightening the puppy during this time, since traumatic experiences can have an effect during this period. As you can see, this period overlaps tha previous on and children or animals should not be allowed to hurt or scare the puppy - either maliciously or inadvertently. It is very important now to introduce other humans, but he must be closely supervised to minimize adverse conditioning. Learning at this age is permanent.

This is the stage where you wonder if your dog is going to be a woosy butt all his life. Also introducing your puppy to other dogs at this time will help him become more socialized. If available in your area, a doggy daycare is great for this.

In the first period (8-11 weeks) dog learns that he is safe around his littermates, in his home and everything around it, he is secure to explore, littermates are considered safe and parents are overseeing the interaction and social behavior.

**Related Traumas:**

* During the Authority Imprint period, dogs may develop various traumas if they are exposed to negative or frightening experiences. Some of the common traumas associated with this period include:
  1. **Separation anxiety:** Separation anxiety may develop if the puppy is taken away from his mother and siblings before the age of eight weeks. This can lead to excessive barking, destructive behavior, and other issues when the dog is left alone.
  2. **Fear of humans:** If the puppy is exposed to harsh or abusive treatment from humans during this period, he may develop a fear of humans that can last a lifetime. Introducing the puppy to other humans during this period is important, but they should be closely supervised to prevent any negative experiences.
  3. **Fear of loud noises:** If the puppy is exposed to loud noises such as fireworks or thunderstorms during this period, he may develop a fear of these noises that can last a lifetime. It is important to expose the puppy to a variety of noises, but they should be introduced gradually and with positive reinforcement.
  4. **Fear of other dogs:** If the puppy is not socialized with other dogs during this period, he may develop a fear of other dogs that can make him aggressive or anxious around them.
  5. **Trauma from accidents**: Accidents such as falling, being stepped on, or getting caught in a door can be traumatic for a puppy during this period and may lead to fear or anxiety around certain situations or objects.

It is important to be patient and gentle with puppies during this period and to expose them to a variety of positive experiences to promote healthy development and prevent traumas.



**Seniority Classification Period or environmental imprint period (13 - 16 Weeks):**

The critical period of puppy development, also known as the seniority classification period or environmental imprint period, is a crucial time in a puppy's life when they are most vulnerable to environmental influences. This period typically occurs between 13 and 16 weeks of age and is characterized by significant behavioral and physiological changes. During this period, puppies are highly receptive to learning and are especially sensitive to trauma and negative experiences that can have a lasting impact on their development.

One of the most significant traumas that puppies can experience during this period is attachment trauma. This can occur when puppies are separated from their mother and littermates too early, causing them to experience anxiety, fear, and even depression. This trauma can lead to a range of behavioral problems, including aggression, separation anxiety, and excessive barking, among others.

To help prevent trauma during the critical period, it is essential to avoid certain exercises that can be stressful or overwhelming for puppies. Here are some examples of exercises to avoid during this time:

1. **Excessive handling:** While it is important to handle puppies regularly to help them become accustomed to human touch, it is essential to avoid excessive handling that can cause stress and anxiety.
2. **Loud noises:** Puppies are highly sensitive to loud noises, which can cause fear and anxiety. Avoid exposing them to loud music, fireworks, or other loud noises during this period.
3. **Socialization with unfamiliar animals:** Puppies are still developing their social skills during this period, so it is essential to avoid exposing them to unfamiliar animals that may be aggressive or intimidating.
4. **Punishment-based training:** Punishment-based training can be harmful to puppies, especially during the critical period when they are still learning and developing. Instead, focus on positive reinforcement-based training methods.

In conclusion, the critical period of puppy development is a crucial time when puppies are highly receptive to learning and are especially vulnerable to trauma and negative experiences. By avoiding certain exercises and providing a safe and nurturing environment, you can help your puppy to grow and thrive during this critical time.

**Related Trauma:**

Other traumas that can affect dogs during the seniority classification period include:

1. **Socialization trauma:** Lack of exposure to different people, animals, and environments can result in puppies developing a fear of new experiences and being overly protective of their owners.
2. **Physical trauma:** Accidents, falls, and injuries can occur during play and exploration, leading to pain, fear, and trauma.
3. **Noise trauma:** Loud and sudden noises, such as fireworks, thunderstorms, and construction sounds, can cause fear and anxiety in puppies, leading to long-term noise phobia.
4. **Medical trauma:** Puppies who experience a serious illness or undergo a painful medical procedure ( vaccinations, spay or neuter) or other surgeries that require confinement or restrictions,  during this period may develop negative associations with the vet or medical procedures, leading to fear and avoidance of healthcare.



**Flight Instinct (second fear) Period (4 to 8 Months):**

The critical period in puppy development is a crucial time for shaping the puppy's behavior and personality. The second fear period, also known as the flight instinct period, occurs between four and eight months of age, and it can be a challenging time for puppies and their owners. During this time, puppies may become more fearful, easily spooked, and may show reluctance to new experiences and people.

The flight instinct period is a time when a puppy's natural survival instincts are heightened, and they may perceive even harmless things as a threat. This heightened sensitivity can lead to traumatic experiences for the puppy, which can have long-lasting effects on their behavior and development.

One of the most common traumas associated with the flight instinct period is attachment trauma. Puppies who are separated from their mothers and littermates too early or are constantly moved from one home to another may develop attachment trauma. This trauma can result in separation anxiety, aggression, and other behavioral problems.

To avoid trauma during the flight instinct period, puppy owners should consider the following exercises:

1. Gradual exposure to new people and environments. Introduce new experiences and people to the puppy gradually, and always ensure the puppy feels safe and comfortable.
2. Positive reinforcement training. Use positive reinforcement methods to train the puppy, such as giving treats and praise when the puppy exhibits good behavior.
3. Consistency in training. Consistency is crucial during this time, as the puppy is highly sensitive and can easily become confused or stressed.
4. Socialization with other dogs. Socialization is important to help the puppy develop good behavior around other dogs and animals.
5. Avoiding punishment. Punishment can be traumatic for puppies during this period, and it can lead to fear, aggression, and other negative behaviors.
6. In conclusion, the flight instinct period can be a challenging time for puppies and their owners. However, with proper care, attention, and training, puppy owners can help their puppies avoid trauma and develop into well-behaved, healthy, and happy adult dogs

**Related Trauma:**

During the Flight Instinct period, dogs may experience traumatic events that can shape their future behavior and personality. Here are some potential traumas associated with this period:

1. **Separation anxiety:** Puppies may become more attached to their owners during this period, leading to separation anxiety when left alone.
2. **Fear of loud noises**: Dogs may become more sensitive to loud noises such as thunderstorms, fireworks, or even loud voices, leading to anxiety and fear.
3. **Traumatic events:** Any traumatic event during this period, such as a car accident or a dog attack, can leave a lasting impression on a puppy and shape their future behavior.
4. **Lack of socialization:** Puppies may become more fearful of new experiences and people during this period, making it crucial to continue socialization efforts.
5. **Negative reinforcement:** If a puppy experiences punishment or negative reinforcement during this period, it can lead to fear and anxiety in the future.



**Environmental Fear impact period (6 - 14 Months):**

Also called, "The fear of situations period," The Environmental Fear impact period is a critical phase in a puppy's development. It is a time when they are vulnerable to environmental influences that can shape their behavior for life. This period typically lasts from 6 to 14 months, during which the puppy may experience associated trauma and attachment issues. In this article, we will discuss the impact of the Environmental Fear impact period and provide a list of exercises to help avoid these issues.

During this period, puppies are susceptible to developing fears and anxieties related to their environment. They may become fearful of loud noises, strangers, other animals, and even objects. This period is crucial because if a puppy does not get enough exposure to various stimuli during this phase, they may become overly fearful or aggressive in the future.

Additionally, attachment trauma can also occur during this period. Puppies may become overly attached to one person, causing them to exhibit anxious behavior when that person is not around. Conversely, they may become overly independent, leading to socialization issues later on.

To avoid these issues, it is essential to provide puppies with adequate exposure to various stimuli during the Environmental Fear impact period. Here are some exercises to help you achieve this goal:

1. Socialization exercises: Take your puppy to various public places such as parks, dog-friendly cafes, and pet stores. This helps them become accustomed to different sounds, sights, and smells.
2. Desensitization exercises: Introduce your puppy to different noises such as vacuum cleaners, lawn mowers, and fireworks. Start with a low volume and gradually increase the intensity to help them become desensitized to these sounds.
3. Playtime with other puppies: Encourage your puppy to play with other puppies in a safe environment. This helps them learn socialization skills and reduce the likelihood of becoming overly attached to one person.
4. Positive reinforcement training: Use positive reinforcement techniques to reward good behavior. This helps to build a positive association with various stimuli and reduces the likelihood of developing fears or anxieties.

In conclusion, the Environmental Fear impact period is a crucial phase in a puppy's development. Providing adequate exposure to various stimuli during this period can help reduce the likelihood of developing fears and anxieties. The exercises mentioned above can help you achieve this goal and promote healthy development for your puppy.

**Trauma:** Here are some of the common traumas and fears that dogs may experience during the Environmental Fear impact period:

1. **Fear of loud noises**: Dogs may develop a phobia of loud noises such as thunderstorms, fireworks, or even vacuum cleaners.
2. **Fear of strangers:** Dogs may become fearful or shy around strangers, veterinary personnel, offices, and groomer, especially if they haven't been socialized properly during this period.
3. **Fear of other animals:** Dogs may develop a fear of other animals, especially if they have had negative experiences with them.
4. **Separation anxiety:** Dogs may develop separation anxiety during this period, which can lead to destructive behavior when left alone.
5. **Fear of new environments:** Dogs may become anxious or fearful when introduced to new environments or situations.
6. **Resource guarding:** Dogs may become possessive of their food, toys, or other resources, which can lead to aggression towards humans or other animals.



**Maturity (1 - 4 years):**

Once a dog reaches full maturity, which can occur between 18 months and four years, depending on their breed, they are fully developed in terms of physical, mental, and emotional capabilities. Smaller breeds tend to mature faster than larger breeds.

Compared to the challenging and sometimes awkward adolescent stage, the mature adult canine is notably more composed and relaxed. This is when all the hard work of consistency, positive reinforcement, and patience during their earlier stages finally pays off.

To avoid trauma during this period, it is important to expose puppies to a variety of positive experiences and stimuli. Here are some exercises that can help:

1. **Socialization:** Introduce your dog to a variety of people, animals, and environments to help them develop confidence and social skills.
2. **Positive reinforcement training:** Use positive reinforcement methods, such as treats and praise, to teach your puppy basic cues and behaviors. Avoid using punishment or physical force, which can cause fear and aggression.
3. **Desensitization:** Gradually expose your puppy to new experiences, such as loud noises or unfamiliar objects, to help them become more comfortable and less fearful.
4. **Playtime:** Provide your puppy with plenty of opportunities for play and exercise, which can help reduce stress and anxiety.
5. **Consistency:** Provide a consistent routine and environment for your puppy, which can help them feel more secure and confident.

Overall, the environmental fear impact period is a critical time for puppy development, and it is important to provide them with positive experiences and socialization to avoid trauma and promote healthy behavior.

**Trauma:**

There are still some potential traumas that dogs may experience during the maturity period of 1-4 years:

1. **Separation anxiety:** Some dogs may experience separation anxiety during this period, especially if they have not been properly socialized or have had previous negative experiences with being left alone.
2. **Fear of strangers:** Dogs may become more protective of their territory and family during this period, leading to fear or aggression towards strangers.
3. **PTSD from previous experiences:** Dogs that have experienced trauma in the past may continue to exhibit behaviors associated with PTSD, such as fear or aggression, during their adult years.
4. **Health issues:** As dogs age, they may develop health issues that can cause physical or emotional trauma, such as arthritis or blindness.
5. **Changes in routine or environment:** Any significant changes in a dog's routine or environment can cause stress and trauma, including moving to a new home (relocation stress) or changing the owner's work schedule.

Dog owners must monitor their pets for signs of trauma and seek professional help if necessary. Proper training, socialization, and a stable environment can go a long way in preventing and addressing potential traumas during the maturity period.

**What to do when something goes wrong**

If you notice sudden changes in your dog's behavior, there are a few steps you can take:

1. **Schedule a visit with your** [**holistic veterinarian**](https://www.ahvma.org/find-a-holistic-veterinarian/#!directory/map/ord=lnm)**:** Sudden behavior changes may indicate an underlying medical issue. Your veterinarian will be able to rule out any medical conditions and provide you with guidance on how to address your dog's behavior.
2. **Keep a log of your dog's behavior:** Write down any changes you notice in your dog's behavior, including when they occur and how long they last. This information can be helpful for your veterinarian in diagnosing the issue. Link To my [Weekly dog training log](https://www.canva.com/design/DAEmjOfd1V0/sdDwwU1r_kayavxEUg_6RQ/view?utm_campaign=designshare&utm_content=DAEmjOfd1V0&utm_medium=link&utm_source=homepage_design_menu)
3. **Rule out any environmental factors:** Consider any changes in your dog's environment that may be contributing to their behavior. For example, has there been a change in their diet, routine, or living situation? Addressing any environmental factors may help resolve the issue.
4. **Provide mental and physical enrichment:** Dogs can become bored and anxious if they don't have enough mental and physical stimulation. Providing your dog with appropriate exercise and toys can help alleviate any behavioral issues.
5. **Seek** [**help from a trauma-informed behavioris**](mailto:roman@holisticdogtraining.org)**t**: If your dog's behavior issues persist, seek the help of a professional dog trainer or behaviorist. They can provide you with personalized guidance on how to address your dog's behavior and improve their overall well-being.
6. **Remove any potential triggers:** If you notice that your dog's behavior changes in certain situations or environments, try to identify and remove any potential triggers. For example, if your dog becomes anxious or aggressive around other dogs at the park, try walking them at a different time or in a quieter area.
7. **Ensure children and other pets don't disturb:** If you have children or other pets, make sure they do not disturb your dog when they are exhibiting abnormal behavior. Give your dog a quiet and comfortable space where they can rest undisturbed.
8. **No visitors:** If your dog's behavior is sudden and severe, it may be best to avoid having visitors until the issue is resolved. This will minimize stress and distractions that could exacerbate the problem.

**Solution is one click away**

Attending a holistic trauma-informed online dog behavior healing program with your dog can be beneficial in several ways. Here are some reasons why it's important:

* 1. **Addressing trauma:** Trauma can cause many behavioral problems in dogs, such as fear, anxiety, aggression, and separation anxiety. A holistic trauma-informed approach can help your dog heal from past traumas and develop more positive behaviors.
  2. **Holistic mind-body-spirit approach**: A holistic approach considers the physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of your dog. This can help your dog heal from a deeper level and achieve long-term behavior change.
  3. **Online convenience**: Online dog behavior programs offer convenience and flexibility. You can attend the program from the comfort of your home and at a time that works best for you.
  4. **No strangers stressing your dog**: Some dogs may feel stressed or anxious around strangers, making it difficult to attend in-person training sessions. With an online program, you can avoid this issue and ensure your dog feels comfortable and safe.
  5. **Do No Harm approach:** A trauma-informed approach prioritizes the safety and well-being of your dog. This means that the program will focus on positive reinforcement and other gentle training methods, rather than punishment or harsh techniques that can harm your dog.
  6. **Recording of the training sessions:** Many online programs offer recordings of the training sessions. This can be helpful for reviewing the material and practicing the techniques with your dog.
  7. **Whole family inclusion:** Including your whole family in the program can help ensure consistency in training and promote a positive family-dog relationship. It can also help everyone understand your dog's needs and how to support their healing journey.
  8. **Short Waiting Times:** Online programs can often offer shorter waiting times compared to in-person programs, allowing you to get started on the training process more quickly.
  9. **No Vaccinations Needed:** With an online program, there is no need for your dog to receive vaccinations or other medical treatments before attending. This can be especially beneficial for dogs with medical issues or those who are sensitive to vaccines.

Dogs with trauma, just like humans, may require specialized care and treatment to overcome the effects of their traumatic experiences. While some dogs with minor trauma may be able to recover on their own, many will require professional help to address issues such as fear, anxiety, aggression, and other behavioral problems that can result from trauma.

[Access your behavior healing program now](https://www.holisticdogtraining.org/premium-online-behavior-healing-bundle)

**Factors of performance**

Generally, genetics account for about 35% of the performance, but the remaining 65% are environmental factors (socialization, attachment, trauma, management, training, nutrition) that can make the difference.  
  
  
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