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**Maternal effects on offspring development in wild apes**

Parental effects, i.e. phenotypic or genotypic traits of parents which influence variation in offspring phenotypes, have been found in a diverse range of animal taxa, influencing a multitude of offspring characteristics. For many mammal species with altricial offspring, maternal effects can occur via post-natal maternal care and provisioning. Humans have a protracted developmental phase relative to lifespan, which may have evolved to facilitate sustained somatic and brain growth. Correlational evidence suggests this long developmental phase, which is associated with strong offspring dependence on mothers for nutrtion, health and survival, means maternal effects can have a profound impact of adult phenotypes in humans. In a series of studies, our research group has been examining the extent of maternal influence on offspring phenotypes in our closest living relatives, chimpanzees, in order to understand the evolution of human life history, and in particular the selective pressures leading to the evolution of human parental care.