Objectives

• Discuss the developmental and evolutionary rationale for the “4th Trimester”
• Review the prevalence of unmet maternal health needs
• Describe how structural racism and implicit bias contribute to disparities in 4th Trimester health
• Discuss recommendations to improve support
Why the 4th trimester?
Evolution and Expectation
Human brain growth

![Graph showing human brain growth across different species and stages of life.](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22230632)
...there are advantages to having growth occur in the stimulating environment of the outside world and a dense social network.
Milk composition & feeding patterns

“At some stage, infant carriage in humans must have undergone modification of some kind, due to the combined effect of extensive reduction of body hair and suppression of the grasping ability of the foot.

There is a fourth trimester to pregnancy, and we neglect it at our peril.

Kitzinger S (1975). The fourth trimester? Midwife Health Visit Community Nurse, Apr; 11(4), 118-121