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Listening, learning, and living together: it's the science of life.

Six Months To One Year: Emotional Development¹

Donna Davis²

"Ahhh...there's few things" in the world that can brighten my day as quickly as the sound of a laughing baby. By the time they are seven to eight months old, babies will begin to show more emotion, including that infectious laugh. During the next couple of months, babies begin to share those wonderful expressions of excitement, pride, joy and affection, even giving unsolicited hugs and kisses.

Between six months and one year, babies also begin developing the other side of their emotion. They may be more anxious around strangers, and will begin to express separation anxiety. But that anxiety is no reason to cancel your dinner plans. According to University of Florida professor Millie Ferrer, during those moments when babies cry because their parent or caregiver is leaving, it's important to give them a little time to get to know a new situation. Try to interest them in the fascinating things in the new environment. When they get busy, kiss them and leave quietly.

Likewise, at this stage of development, babies begin to express their independence—sometimes with a pout, sometimes by declaring a loud "No," or even with a temper tantrum. Experts say that when babies throw temper tantrums because they can't do something, teach them how to do it, if appropriate for their age. If the temper tantrum

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is because of something that is forbidden, distract the baby with another activity. If distraction doesn't work, make sure the baby is safe and then ignore him or her. Stay nearby, but do not pay attention to the baby until he or she is calm. Then give the baby a hug and acknowledge their feelings.

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