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

## **Six Months to One Year: Intellectual Development<sup>1</sup>**

*Donna Davis<sup>2</sup>*

A few years back, thanks to the advent of computer animation, filmmakers found audiences were entertained by the notion of understanding what babies might actually be communicating in the "Look Who's Talking" movie series. Were it so easy. While babies appear to have "dialogue" with one another and can get quite a conversation rolling with baby babble, experts say that babies are still working on "mama," "dada," and "no" until they're between 8 and 15 months old. Still, at around nine months, babies are steadily increasing their ability to communicate. At this point they can probably respond to a few words such as their name, "bottle," "no," or "ball." That babble they offer in return is their way of developing their first words, so it's important to play dialogue games with babies. As far as they know, they are talking to you. Talking back to them will encourage babies to develop their vocabulary.

Babies will begin to explore their environments at this stage as well. They are curious and will spend a lot of time investigating things. They now understand cause and effect and the concept of object permanence. Before now, if a baby cannot see an object, the object does not seem to exist for him or her. This is the time to start playing peek-a-boo,

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to bring out the pop-up toys, and to read books with big pictures. These activities will further stimulate their intellectual development.

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