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

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

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

"One of the great thrills in a baby's first year is hearing those first words...particularly when it's "mama" or "dada." By seven or eight months of age, babies will begin trying out sounds and are becoming more social. They will watch and listen when they're spoken to and will babble in return.

While they're becoming more social, at seven and eight months they can also become more demanding! One of the sounds that can be more trying is the "demand cry," when babies begin to cry for attention. According to parenting experts, starting around the seventh month, it is possible to spoil a baby. By the eighth month, they can develop the habit of using the demand cry too often. There are many ways to keep a baby occupied so they will be less likely to overuse the demand cry.

As they are becoming more social and more mobile, babies will also begin exploring their environments and their limits. Experts suggest avoiding situations that constantly force you to say "no" or "don't touch." Now it's also time to babyproof the house, giving baby the freedom to explore safely. It's also not too soon to begin establishing expectations and setting limits. According to Millie Ferrer at the University of Florida, it's important

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2. Donna Davis, Senior Producer, Family Album Radio, Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611. Reviewed by Millie Ferrer, Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, University of Florida.

to be kind, gentle, patient and firm. Babies need to know they're loved and that they can't have everything their way.

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