

pinna should meet or cross this line. Low-set ears are commonly associated with renal anomalies or cognitive impairment. Measure the angle of the pinna by drawing a perpendicular line from the imaginary horizontal line and aligning the pinna next to this mark. Normally the pinna lies within a 10-degree angle of the vertical line (Fig. 4-20). If it falls outside this area, record the deviation and look for other anomalies.

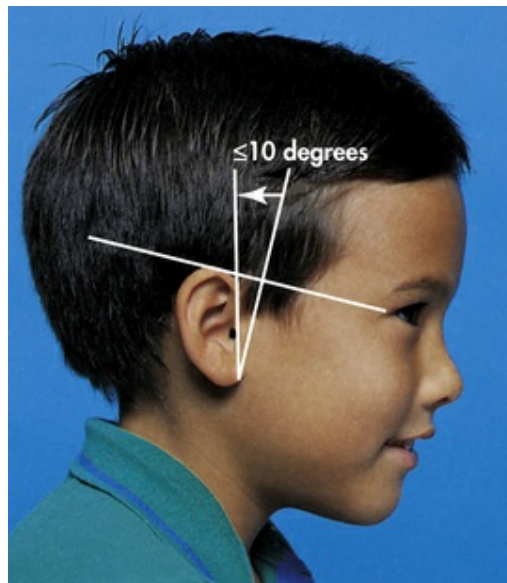


FIG 4-20 Ear alignment.

Normally the pinna extends slightly outward from the skull. Except in newborn infants, ears that are flat against the head or protruding away from the scalp may indicate problems. Flattened ears in an infant may suggest a frequent side-lying position and, just as with isolated areas of hair loss, may be a clue to investigate parents' understanding of the child's stimulation needs.

Inspect the skin surface around the ear for small openings, extra tags of skin, sinuses, or earlobe creases. If a sinus is found, note this because it may represent a fistula that drains into some area of the neck or ear. Note if an earlobe crease is found, because it may be associated with a rare, inherited syndrome. However, having one small abnormality is not uncommon and is often not associated with a serious condition. Cutaneous tags represent no pathologic process but may cause parents concern in terms of the child's appearance.