



Kids can be so Cruel

Are you child's ears sticking out? Is your child referred to as dumbo at school? Prominent protruding ears can look unnatural. By 3-4 years of age children begin to recognize the difference in their ears from that of their peers. However it is not until 6-10 years of age that caustic remarks begin to leave psychological scars. There is evidence to suggest that children with prominent ears have a higher incidence of behavioral and psychological problems. Severe and persistent ridicule may lead to poor academic performance and even possibly neuroses. Adults with prominent ears may be sensitive about their appearance and exhibit a poor self-image. They may blame a lack of career promotion or social undesirability on their ear appearance. Outstanding ears (promin auris) affect approximately 5% percent of Caucasian children. Usually children are born with prominent ears and often it is inherited, running in families. Through a minor procedure called otoplasty the ears can be set back to a natural position. There is very little discomfort and children can resume a fairly normal schedule within a week. It is best to undergo the procedure when your child is around 6 years of age or older. At this age the ear has achieved at least 90% of it adult size and children seem to be more compliant with the treatment. Most importantly, the intervention is early enough to prevent the damaging effects of cruel psychosocial remarks. Inquire with your insurance carrier, certain third party payers will cover the expenses. If you are concerned about the potential psychological trauma inflicted by unnecessary teasing or if you believe your child's ears appear unnatural, consult with your plastic surgeon.



Steven H. Dayan, MD, FACS
The Chicago Center for Facial Plastic Surgery
2900 N. Lake Shore Drive, Manor Building, Suite 430
Chicago, Illinois 60657