When a child is not eating enough by mouth and is losing weight or not gaining weight, feeding tubes can have an impact on things like speech, motor development, the respiratory system, and can cause epilepsy. “In a way, the diagnosis gave us peace of mind because we finally knew exactly what was happening,” says Joanna. “Junior has used a g-tube, one of the many types of feeding tubes, for the majority of his life. Having been at La Rabida for nearly four months, Junior has become a part of the La Rabida family and delivered toys and gift bags to our families. He is very alert when people speak to him. Sophie is sleeping through the night as well – she didn’t do that at home. Since arriving to La Rabida, Sophie has made great improvements. “Sophie is not having the seizures that she would before,” shares Jesenia. And for a child who once relied on a ventilator around the clock, Sophie is making strides to breathe on her own. “She’s now off the vent for about 7 hours throughout the day and has been able to communicate with us a lot more.”

Sophie was born at 33 weeks weighing a mere 4 pounds. After over a month in the NICU, Sophie’s parents realized that she was not gaining weight. “At first, doctors thought she just needed to eat more,” says her mom. “But no matter how many calories we gave her, she didn’t have any trauma to her brain.”

Sophie’s mom, Jesenia, says that she didn’t know what to do until Junior’s mom referred her to La Rabida. “We had heard so much about La Rabida and how wonderful the staff is,” she says. “I knew we had to try.”

Junior has used a g-tube, one of the many types of feeding tubes, for the majority of his life. “When we were home, Sophie was always crying,” says Jesenia. “I just knew that something was wrong with her.”

Junior’s mom, Joanna, says that she was “very happy about the g-tube, but I just wish I had gotten it sooner.”

As someone who was a sick child, it is so meaningful that I am able to help these kids through their experience with the g-tube and now exploring real foods,” shares Joanna. “Junior has made great progress. “He’s learned sign language to help him communicate, he smiles, and, most importantly, has started tasting real food,” shares Joanna. “He is going to be an eater. I just know it.”

Sophie’s mom, Jesenia, says that she was “very happy about the g-tube, but I just wish I had gotten it sooner.”

Life with a Feeding Tube

Teaching the Future Generation

At La Rabida, we believe in supporting our community by providing education and resources to help children and families. Our programs are designed to help children and families navigate the challenges of living with medical conditions, and we offer a variety of opportunities to learn about nutrition, education, and advocacy.

In order to get started, please visit our website or call us at 773-237-3000. Our staff will be happy to provide you with more information about our services and how we can help.

For more information, please visit www.larabida.org.