

Mateo's Story

Augmentative Communication Expands Mateo's World

The Professional Center for Child Development has been part of our family since Mateo was two years old. Mateo was born healthy and began losing developmental milestones at three months of age. At five months, he was diagnosed with Infantile Spasms. Mateo has global developmental delays and lots of health issues from low tone and Mitochondrial Disorder. He is also legally blind. He is non-verbal and communicates with vocalizations, facial expressions, eye gaze and his switches. We first met through the Northeast RCP (Regional Consultation Program) which is located at PCCD. The RCP staff introduced us to the PCCD Developmental Day School and was a huge advocate of both the day school staff and of Mateo. It was through Early Intervention and RCP that we were first exposed to Augmentative Communication tools and toys through the RCP loan program. This exposure has been life changing for Mateo and us as a family.

Mateo started the day school in his third year of life. We had a big battle with our school district and finally succeeded in making the argument that the PCCD was the best and safest school for Mateo. We all fell in love with his teacher, who brought such a playful and loving spirit to her teaching. We also love his current teacher! It is thanks to the wonderful nurses who manage the long list of complex healthcare needs that Mateo can be in school. Anyone can see how much Mateo loves school, by his smile and the light in his eyes. We soon discovered that all of the staff have an exceptional love and care for each of their students. It means so much when others can see the potential that your child has and celebrate his perseverance, hardworking nature and his humor. Mateo now communicates with a TOBI I12 communication device. We are so appreciative to the PCCD staff who supported his trial and helped to get approval by our insurance company. The TOBI has made a huge difference in Mateo's quality of life. He has become more empowered to communicate his choices, from telling us he needs a diaper change and choosing which activity he wants to do, to sharing a joke. He also enjoys sharing information about his puppy, Amiga, whom we are training as a therapy dog for Mateo. Consequently, Mateo is a happier child.

Michele (Mateo's Mother)