What will children need to be successful? That question could have titled an article or blog entry in Parenting magazine, or Time, or Motherlode, or the Houston Chronicle. Instead, it opens a research review (scroll down to page 2) in the current issue of Science magazine, the academic journal of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and one of the world’s most cited scientific journals.

In answer to the question, “What will children need to be successful?” the authors, Adele Diamond and Kathleen Lee, identify four key qualities: creativity, flexibility, self-control, and discipline. Those qualities are executive functions (EFs), “the cognitive control functions needed when you have to concentrate and think, when acting on your initial impulse might be ill-advised.... Core EFs are cognitive flexibility, inhibition (self-control, self-regulation), and working memory. More complex EFs include problem-solving, reasoning, and planning.”

continued on page 2
These qualities lead to success in school—and they remain critical to success in adult life: in your career, in your marriage, and for positive mental and physical health.

If executive functioning skills are so important for achieving success in school and life, how can we help our children develop them? Diamond and Lee say, “There is scientific evidence supporting six approaches for improving EFs in the early school years.” The first method is aimed at providing remedial help for those children with obvious deficits on the EF front, and will elicit a cringe response from the Post Oak faculty: computerized training. There has been some success using computer games to develop inhibition as well as short-term memory. The next two approaches are both based in physical activity: aerobic exercise, and martial arts (e.g. Tae-kwon-do)/mindfulness practice (e.g. Yoga). It is not surprising to learn that martial arts improve EFs since they emphasize self-control, discipline, and character development.

The final approaches that promote the development of EFs are school-based. Two are classroom curricula, and two others are curricular add-ons. Tools of the Mind is a preschool curriculum based on the work of the psychologist Lev Vygotsky.

You may have guessed the other curriculum that promotes the development of EFs: Montessori education. How do we promote the development of EFs at Post Oak? In the primary classroom, we help children develop self-control, a core executive functioning skill, in many different and very direct ways. Here’s one example: there is only one puzzle map of the United States in each classroom. When a child takes this map off the shelf to work on it, other children notice. “That looks interesting. It looks like fun. I’d like to work on that myself.” But there is only one map of the United States and someone is already using it. In a conventional preschool, the child working on the map would likely be told, “Share the map with your classmate.” In Montessori schools, the child working with the map could invite his classmate to join him, but that would be his choice. He would certainly not be pressured to do so. In fact, the standard expectation is that the interested classmate must wait to work on the map until the first child finishes and returns it to the shelf. Waiting requires inhibition and self-control. In fact, children develop inhibition and self-control through practice. Having to wait their turn is a part of that practice. (As Diamond and Lee say, “Curricula need to address EFs throughout the day, not only in a module.”) Dr. Montessori understood that. This is why we have only one puzzle map of the United States, and for most other materials in the classroom, only one of each.

What about the development of more complex EFs, such as planning? Let’s look to middle school. Our Middle School travels to Washington DC every year. So do other middle schools. In fact, several other Houston private schools send middle school students to DC every year. Post Oak students plan their trip. Students in other schools do not. In fact, most schools use a travel service to plan, organize, and direct the trip. Post Oak students work under the guidance of faculty to plan every aspect of the trip: from booking airline tickets to arranging restaurant meals, and choosing the sites for each day’s agenda. This gets down to the nitty-gritty details of figuring out where the subway stops are and how long it will take to get from the Washington Monument to the Capitol building.

On paper, both schools travel to Washington DC; and students in each school have the same educational experience. In fact, they do not. At Post Oak, the development of executive functioning skills is an explicit part of the curriculum. Students develop those skills through practice. Planning the Washington DC trip is a prominent example of practicing those skills on a grand scale.

“What will children need to be successful?” The development of EFs is a critical component to success in school and life.

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http://devcogneuro.com/Publications/science_interventions_shown_to_aid.pdf

Underlined phrases in this article are links to websites—you can access them in the online edition from our website (link on the left side of the homepage).
Parent Work Day

A big thank you to all the parents who came to help prepare the classrooms on August 12. The next work day is October 5.
Sign-up Day for Bearkats & Intramurals

by Mark Tucker, Athletics Director & Bearkats coach

Last Friday the athletic department here at The Post Oak School held its second annual Bearkats Sign-up Day in the gym. Pizza was enjoyed by all along with a few snacks for all the students who attended the gathering.

Over 70 students showed up to listen to information on the coming year for Bearkats and our intramural program. These activities are for any of our students in Upper Elementary and Middle School. The students who signed up for Bearkats were also asked to give us their sizes so that we can order uniforms for each sport we play this year which will include cross country, soccer, basketball, and volleyball. Students who are in the sixth grade and Middle School are eligible to play on the Bearkats sports teams and the younger Upper Elementary students are eligible for our intramural program which will follow along with the sports seasons of the Bearkats.

A total of 50 students signed up during the event to participate this year. If your child did not sign up last Friday and is still interested, it’s not too late. Please contact either Coach Tucker or Coach Dilger.

Go Bearkats!
Go Green Team!

Dear Parents,

If you have an interest in environmental issues related to the school, I invite you to become a part of Post Oak’s Green Team. In past years, the Green Team has worked on a variety of projects including: recycling, the outdoor nature learning center, a magazine exchange, lighting efficiency, IT green issues, and reviewing Post Oak’s cleaning products. We have a board of trustees-endorsed Green Principles document in place, and we hope to continue the good green work again this year. If you have an interest in participating, please let me know by responding by email (kellymcnamara@postoakschool.org). Meetings will be held once a month, beginning early in September.

Thanks! – Kelly McNamara

The library needs you

Calling volunteers to work in the library! If you have some time during the week, please consider lending a hand in the library. Any amount of time is helpful.

Contact Librarian
B.R. Simon at brsimon@postoakschool.org.

You don’t have to play hookie to explore the zoo.

OPENING FALL 2012
APPLY NOW

The day I skipped school to go to the zoo was one of the best days I remember from high school. Isn’t it great that they won’t have to do that? – Elaine

Learn more about the POHS on September 22.
1. Playing the bells.
2. Focusing on pegs and shapes.
3. Building fine motor skills.
4. Learning congruency, similarity, and equivalence with square metal insets.
5. Working with the binomial cube.
6. Immersed in creative writing.
7. Researching arachnids.
8. Math with the large bead frame.
10. MS students at community service.
11. Elementary students jog, skip, and hop in physical fitness.
New Parent Welcome Coffee
Welcome our new families

A warm welcome was given this week by Post Oak’s administration and POPA leadership to all new Post Oak School parents (see opposite page.) If you turn back a page to Scenes from The Post Oak School, you’ll see three new students in action: 1) , 2) , and 3) . Look for more photos of new faces in the coming weeks.

In the spotlight

Congratulations to who was featured in Skating magazine this summer. Her mother Josie says, “she has such big goals for a 12-year-old and I think Montessori education has really contributed to that. We are so proud of her.” Have a look:

http://digital.publicationprinters.com/publication/?i=74818&amp;p=50

Keeping arrival and dismissal safe

Primary arrival in the Peace Circle

For safety reasons, if your child is physically resisting getting out of the car during arrival, you will be asked to park on the other side of the Peace Circle and help your child exit the vehicle. Please then walk your child to one of the employees helping with Primary arrival.

No passing

Please do not pass on the left in the Peace Circle. Wait for the car in front of you to finish dropping children off, and proceed behind it. Treat each car as though you are encountering a stopped school bus. Children are small and quick, and you may not see them between the cars.

Reminder: no cell phones

Please remember not to use your mobile devices to talk, text, etc., while driving on our campus, especially during arrival and dismissal. You may only use them while your car is in park.

Paperwork drop-off in the Peace Circle

Hand your front office envelopes or paperwork to one of the people assisting with Primary arrivals and it will be taken to reception every morning.

FIELD DAY GOODIES

—Jamie Lee and Vivian Lee, Field Day Co-Chairs

Mark your calendars now for Saturday, October 15 – Field Day is upon us! Each year Field Day is a fantastic opportunity for the Post Oak community to come together for a family-friendly event at our school. Get excited, get ready, and sign up to join us for a day filled with activities and events related to our theme: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.

Keeping our theme in mind, we are selling reusable water bottles this year (in lieu of t-shirts). We hope that our community can help make our mark on the environment by reducing our reliance on plastic bottles... and we can do this together on Field Day by sporting our new Post Oak insulated stainless steel water bottles. See you on October 15!

Order your Field Day water bottle online next week or look for the mail-in form in the September 15 edition of The Weekly Post. Bottles (16 oz.) are $10.
Becoming a Love & Logic Parent

Post Oak Counselor Phylis Tomlinson presents this curriculum for parents with children Elementary age and beyond. This program is designed to give you practical skills that can be used immediately.

FALL CLASSES 2011

EVENING

Wednesdays, 6:30–8:00 pm, 7 classes
Sept. 21, 28, Oct. 5, 12, 19, 26, and Nov. 9
Cost: $200 per couple, 7 classes, $125 per person plus $10 per workbook
Discount for prior completion of entire series

DAY

Thursdays, 9:10–10:30 am, 7 classes
Sept. 22, 29, Oct. 13, 20, 27, and Nov. 10, 17
Fee: $20 per person, includes workbook
(classes are underwritten by The Post Oak School)

For more information please call Phylis at 713-661-6688 ext.176

Redirecting Children’s Behavior course

This six week, 15-hour course is designed to guide parents to use discipline as a process of teaching children self-control and responsibility. Redirecting Children’s Behavior is a positive, powerful, informative, and fun training course which will give you a complete system for handling every situation in which adults interact with children, from infancy to adolescence. You will see it working and bringing positive changes to your parenting and your family from the first class onward.

www.deborah-fry.com or www.incaf.com

The course will be taught by Deborah Fry, Ph.D. She is a certified instructor for the International Network for Children and Families.

Coffee with the Elementary Director

September 7, 2011
9:00–10:00 am
Multipurpose room

Topic: an open discussion about the Elementary conference report

Throughout each semester, and in advance of the fall and spring conferences, teachers put their time, energy, and knowledge of your child into a written document we call the conference report. We want to know how well this report is meeting your need for information about your child’s progress. You are invited to come let us know what’s working, and how we can improve. I look forward to hearing your thoughts. If you are not able to attend, I invite you to share your ideas via email: jeffschneider@postoakschool.org

Class information

Dates: September 20–October 25
(6 Tuesday evenings)
Time: 6:30 to 9:00 pm
Place: The Post Oak School
4600 Bissonnet Street
Bellaire, Texas 77401

Deborah gives talks and seminars for parents, teachers and people involved with children and families, as well as teaches three-year-olds at Westminster Weekday School. To register, call Deborah at 713-840-8663.
Registration for conferences

The online parent/teacher conference scheduling is now open. Conference days are September 30, October 21 and 28 (Infant Community is in session on the 28th). To sign up for a conference go to www.posotakschool.org ▶ For Parents ▶ Schedule/View a parent-teacher conference and have your login information ready. If you are having problems, please contact the technology director, Mirna Andrade-Salgado at technology@postoakschool.org or 281-822-8063.

The Post Oak Parents Association invites you to attend the annual

WELCOME DINNER

Tuesday, September 13, 2011
6:30 pm to 9:30 pm

Pre-reception at 6:00 pm for new parents, faculty, board, & room parents

The Junior League of Houston
1811 Briar Oak Lane, Houston, Texas 77027

POPA Dinner Chairs
Shonali Agrawal & Stacey Martin

POPA Chairs
Laura Citardi & Whitney Walsh

Business attire
Parking available in the garage

RSVP with reply card or online at www.postoakschool.org

This is an adults-only event.

*Unfortunately, we are unable to provide the Kosher dinner option listed on the response card. Those who have already responded selecting a Kosher dinner will be contacted by administration.

Randalls Good Neighbor program
directs a percentage of your purchase to Post Oak

Fill out the form for Randalls on the Grocery Store Rebate form on our website to donate a percentage of your purchase to Post Oak. The Post Oak School number is 2531. You can find the form online under For Parents ▶ Information Center ▶ Forms and Publications.
**CAALENDAR**
For more, visit www.postoakschool.org

**SEPTEMBER 4–SEPTEMBER 10**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>Labor Day (school closed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>Coffee with the Elementary Director</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9:00 am</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thu</td>
<td>High School application event</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4:00 pm</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Infant Community Parent Orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7:00 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>No Weekly Post</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**SEPTEMBER 11–SEPTEMBER 17**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tue</td>
<td>POPA Dinner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>Intro to Redirecting Children’s Behavior</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7:00–8:30 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>Teacher in-service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Classes not in session; only students with expanded year contracts attend</td>
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</tbody>
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**NOTICE BOARD**

**New Additions**

Announcing the arrival of twin sisters. They were born on June 25, 2011 at 2:40 and 2:47 am, weighing 5 lbs. 7 ozs. and 5 lbs. 1 oz., respectively. Congratulations to parents Leashanne and James!

**The Weekly Post schedule for fall 2011**

- September 15
- September 23
- October 7
- October 14
- October 27
- November 11
- November 18
- December 2
- December 16

**Seeking nanny**

We are looking for a nanny for childcare and light household duties afternoons for 20 to 25 hours a week. If you know of someone, please have them contact Alicia at (713) 899-6394.

**Montessori Journey**

Registration for the Montessori Journey is now available on our website. This workshop is a powerful, hands-on approach to understanding how and what your child is learning. Space is limited, so sign up early to reserve a spot.

**ABOUT THE WEEKLY POST**

*The Weekly Post* appears on most Fridays of the regular school year. You can receive a printed copy from your oldest child, or a PDF version online.

Submit letters, articles, or photos in electronic form by 5:00 pm on the Tuesday before publication to Communications Coordinator Elaine Schweizer (elaineschweizer@postoakschool.org). If publication is on a Thursday due to school closure on Friday, then the deadline is 5:00 pm on the preceding Monday.

All photos in *The Weekly Post* are by Elaine Schweizer unless otherwise noted.

The Post Oak School was founded in 1963 and accredited by both the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) and the Independent Schools Association of the Southwest (ISAS).

4600 Bissonnet, Bellaire, Texas 77401 • Telephone: 713-661-6688 • Fax: 713-661-4959 • www.postoakschool.org