When “Touch Screen Generation” appeared this week in The Atlantic, several Post Oak parents and faculty members sent me the link. They did so not just because its author, Hanna Rosin, mentions Dr. Montessori in the second paragraph, but because there is high interest in understanding the value and the risk of technology to our developing children. As Rosin writes, “Every new medium has, within a short time of its introduction, been condemned as a threat to young people.”

Here’s an initial response to Rosin’s article from a thoughtful Montessori writer.

And here’s another article published three days after Rosin’s, which examines the physical, social, and emotional effects of using electronic media—on adults and children. We’re really trying to understand the impact of technology on our lives.
Rosin does not give us easy answers, but she explores the territory in fascinating detail. Here are a few excerpts from the article to pique your interest:

ON A CHILLY DAY last spring, a few dozen developers of children’s apps for phones and tablets gathered at an old beach resort in Monterey, California, to show off their games.

What, really, would Maria Montessori have made of this scene? The 30 or so children here were not down at the shore poking their fingers in the sand or running them along mossy stones or digging for hermit crabs. Instead they were all inside, alone or in groups of two or three, their faces a few inches from a screen, their hands doing things Montessori surely did not imagine.

As technology becomes ubiquitous in our lives, American parents are becoming more, not less, wary of what it might be doing to their children. Parents end up treating tablets like precision surgical instruments, gadgets that might perform miracles for their child’s IQ and help him win some nifty robotics competition—but only if they are used just so. Otherwise, their child could end up one of those sad, pale creatures who can’t make eye contact and has an avatar for a girlfriend.

Without seeming to think much about it or resolve how they felt, parents began giving their devices over to their children to mollify, pacify, or otherwise entertain them.

“Some people can get so drawn into screens that they want to do nothing else but play games. Experts say excessive video gaming is a real problem…

In her excellent book *Screen Time*, the journalist Lisa Guernsey lays out a useful framework—what she calls the three C’s—for thinking about media consumption: content, context, and your child.

“…The war is over. The natives won.” So says Marc Prensky, the education and technology writer, who has the most extreme parenting philosophy of anyone I encountered in my reporting. Prensky’s 7-year-old son has access to books, TV, Legos, Wii—and Prensky treats them all the same. He does not limit access to any of them.

Are books always, in every situation, inherently better than screens? My daughter, after all, often uses books as a way to avoid social interaction, while my son uses the Wii to bond with friends.

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www.nytimes.com/2013/03/24/opinion/sunday/your-phone-vs-your-heart.html
montessoriobserver.com/2013/03/25/the-touch-screen-article-in-the-atlantic/
theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2013/04/the-touch-screen-generation/309250/

Underlined phrases in this article are links to websites—access them in the online edition (link on the left side of the homepage).
Parent Perspectives: The Post Oak Community

by Emily Browning, Post Oak parent

This time last year Adam and I were struggling to figure out how to move our three children [redacted] and [redacted] from a small farm in rural western Massachusetts to Houston, a city of over four million people. How could we best ensure that our kids would feel confident, safe, and secure as they transitioned from a small town tucked inside the Berkshire foothills to a big city? Many nights of searching on the internet led us to The Post Oak School. Our ambition was that Post Oak would provide a small community for the kids so that at least some part of Houston would not seem so big, so foreign.

Now almost a year later we consider Post Oak reason enough alone to have made the move. Our kids possess different educational needs and it is remarkable that the school meets each of their styles. [redacted] belongs to the inaugural class of the high school, and as the year has progressed we see firsthand what a truly unique experience these kids are having. This fabulous group of students and faculty are building a community based on respect and intellectual exploration. The students engage in positive activities and enthusiastically explore the opportunities to learn outside of the school. [redacted] refers to the high school as a place where he is “learning things that are actually useful in life.” [redacted], a member of Maya Pinto’s class, is having a remarkable year filled with much needed opportunities to challenge and expand his intellectual curiosity. His Christmas card to us, now tucked away in a special place, said thank you “for providing him with a great education.” In his quiet way [redacted] was telling us just how important Post Oak was to him. And our [redacted], a member of Orly Kluk’s class, is starting out just where she needs to be. The one we were most concerned about moving seems right at home.

Adam and I are so grateful to have found a place where our children feel safe, confident, and are engaged in learning. We are so thankful for the patience, insight, and commitment of the faculty and staff; from day one they have embraced our children. The community has also reached out to our kids in so many ways—the play dates, trips with the high school, and so much more have all made our kids feel welcome. Finally, our biggest thanks goes to the Post Oak students. What a great group! They received our kids into their school community with tremendous kindness and fast friendships. It has been a fantastic journey.

Coffee with the Head of School

Wednesday, April 17, 2013
9 a.m.

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MARCH 28, 2013
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CALENDAR NOTES

Don’t forget to mark your calendars with these changes:

Bearkats Celebration Banquet: April 16
Upper EL MMUN in NY: April 23–27
POPA Volunteer Appreciation Event: May 15

Next year’s important dates are online at www.postoakschool.org/postoak/School_Calendar.asp
Outfitting Your Montessori Home

Families Integrating School and Home (F.I.S.H.) met on Thursday March 7 to discuss Outfitting Your Montessori Home. Thank you to Sarah Moudry and Tamara Basham for their ideas about how to create a supportive home environment for the family. Here are some of the items discussed:

Furnishing a home that fits both children and adults, including:

- Furniture such as shelves and chairs of different sizes to accommodate children and adults,
- creating spaces that support the activity that occurs there (i.e. entertainment),
- creating spaces that reflect each family member in a harmonious way,
- Sarah Moudry brought examples from her home to demonstrate.

Creating a home environment that allows children to help in the daily life activities. Tamara explained that allowing children to participate in daily work such as cleaning, shopping, preparing food and putting things away allows a child to spend time with the adult, feel useful and learn. This is very rewarding for the children, keeping in mind that the young child is interested in the process (sweeping) rather than the end result (a swept floor). Tamara discussed supplying tools that are child-sized, managing adult expectations to keep frustration in check, and strategies for not rushing the child.

Creating systems that work for the family, including:

- stools so children can reach items,
- self-contained activities (i.e. a mop, bucket and water source),
- practice with the adult (including showing where the activity is, how to use it and how to put it away),
- other ways to set up chores that allow children to feel successful and independent.

Please join us for our next F.I.S.H meeting, Friday, April 19, the Young Chef.

F.I.S.H. is a parent group focused on helping families create their own Montessori environment at home with the guidance of experts and ideas generated by parents. We meet for a discussion guided by teachers or an expert. It is an opportunity for parents to come together, share ideas, receive feedback, put it into practice, and benefit from the rewards.
Until I attended a recent event, I had not realized how long I had been gone from The Post Oak School. Obviously, my life has changed drastically since I walked the halls as a 7th grade child in 1995, but I had no idea how much my “tiny” school has accomplished in the past 17 years. I cannot describe the feeling and up-welling of emotions I experienced from walking around the building at the Alumni Sporting Event and on Alumni Night. I was asked to write a little bit about myself, and my experience returning to the school of my youth.

The Post Oak School laid a wonderful educational, emotional, and spiritual foundation for my future. Upon leaving Post Oak, I attended Westbury Christian for one year, and Clements High School thereafter. I graduated, packed my bags, and headed to Austin to attend the University of Texas. Upon receiving a Bachelor’s degree in Government and History, I came back home to Houston to attend South Texas College of Law. It was not unusual to run into former Post Oak students in places of higher education—I almost came to expect it. Throughout my educational journey, I found myself using techniques and actual knowledge from lessons learned at Post Oak. I believe that I retained so much information from my time at Post Oak due to the methods the faculty employed to teach us. All the lessons were hands on or we took a field trip (when applicable) to reinforce the things we read or were taught to us in class. Ultimately, we learned how to “learn” and figured out how to be our own teachers. The Post Oak School teaches children how to think for themselves, and not accept the status quo. From my experience at Post Oak, I learned that students are challenged and are to expect more from themselves. When you do not accomplish your goals, the person you hurt the most is yourself. The staff and faculty is composed of caring, loving individuals, who live by the words they teach. If you want your child to get a foundation that will last them a lifetime—enroll them in The Post Oak School. You, and especially your child, will not regret it.

Masoud Darvishi
ATTENDED THROUGH 7TH GRADE
Nanny Class

Deborah Fry, Redirecting Children’s Behavior instructor, will lead a series of four classes designed for nannies. The class will be taught in English, however, the workbook is available in Spanish if requested. The class will meet on four Thursdays:

April 4, 11, 18, and 25
from 9:15–10:45 a.m.

Upon completion of the class the nanny will be able to:
- Practice a consistent set of guidelines which harmonize with the approach your child experiences at school everyday
- Use positive language to redirect children’s behavior
- Encourage your child’s self-care skills and sense of responsibility
- Reduce sibling rivalry
- Interact to build self-esteem

The cost of the class is $150 per person. The class will be limited to 12 participants with a minimum of 8 for the class to be held.

To register call Deborah Fry at 713-840-8663

Love & Logic® Follow Ups

Tuesdays, 9:00–10:00 a.m.
March 5, April 9, and May 7
at The Post Oak School

Join Post Oak counselor Phylis Tomlinson for three one-hour sessions, brainstorming solutions and reinforcing Love and Logic® concepts. These gatherings are for all interested parents whether you’ve attended the series or not.

This event is free. Contact Phylis for more information at phylis@email.com.

Apex Cheer Tryouts for 2013–2014

Upper EL student X has cheered with this gym for 2 years and loves the friendship, exercise, challenges, and fun. She just completed this season at a competition where they performed at the ESPN Wide World of Sports and at Disney’s Hollywood Studios. The gym is opening a beautiful new facility and they would love for you to come join the fun!

For more info talk to Bair in Mr. Pinto’s class. You can also email her mom Teri at teri@email.com or call her at 713-840-8663

Coffee with the Elementary Director

Wed., April 10, 2013
at 9:00 a.m.

Topic: Primary to Elementary transition

The Weekly Post
March 28, 2013
A Gala Auction Item!

FRIDAY, APRIL 19

on the back field at Post Oak

Movie starts at 8:00 p.m.
Doors open at 7:00 p.m.

Come out early for fun prizes from BBVA—shoot and score neat items!

$15 per person

Rain or shine! It’s fun for the whole family!

Email Kathryn Murphy to purchase tickets:
kathrynmurphy@postoakschool.org or call 713-661-6688 ext. 130.

Patch Assembly

Friday, April 19
at 12:30 p.m. in the gym

An anonymous donor has given The Post Oak School a gift of The Patch Exercise Equipment for student use. The Patch is used by professional athletes, colleges, and schools to introduce more flexibility and fun in exercise. We are the first school in Houston to have this equipment and we are planning a 30-minute ribbon cutting/assembly on Friday, April 19 at 12:30 for Primary, Elementary, and Middle School students, as well as parents, faculty, and staff. One of The Patch trainers from California will be on hand to talk about the equipment and there will a short demonstration by Post Oak students.

Mark Tucker, Physical Fitness Specialist and Bearkats Coach

High School Admission
OPEN HOUSE

Wed. April 10, 7 p.m.
1102 Autrey St., Houston
CALENDAR

MARCH 31–APRIL 6

Mon–Fri 4/1–4/5
MS Girls to Blackwood Land Institute

Tue 4/2
CANCELLED: Parent Dinner & Tour at Blackwood

Wed 4/3
POPA Coffee/Work Day
8:45 a.m.–noon

Thu 4/4
Nanny class ($ and reg. req.)
9:15–10:45 a.m.

IC Parent Ed Meeting
7:00 p.m.

APRIL 7–13

Coffee with the EL Director:
PRI to EL Transition
9:00–10:00 a.m.

HS Admission Open House
7:00 p.m.

Wed–Sat 4/10–4/13
MS MMUN in NY

Fri 4/12
Conference day
Classes not in session: only students with expanded your contracts attend.

NOTICE BOARD

BACKYARD BBQ & CELEBRATION

Bearkats and Intramural players, along with their families, faculty, and staff, are invited to a backyard barbecue catered by Beck’s Prime, and a program celebrating the hard work of our Post Oak athletes.

Join the fun in the Post Oak gym
Tues., April 16, 6 to 8 p.m.

RSVP with number attending by Friday, April 12. Call 713-661-6688 or email frontoffice@postoakschool.org.

POP A Coffee/Work Day
Wed., April 3
8:45 a.m.–noon

Check out our calendar online or download a copy at www.postoakschool.org

BIG SISTER

Primary student [REDACTED] is the big sister to [REDACTED], born on February 13, weighing 8 pounds and measuring 21.5 inches.

Congratulations to [REDACTED] and her proud parents, Kate & Lance, and their protective dog, Rugby! ♦️

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 p.m. 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 p.m. 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