

# The Power of Toddler Hands: ExcelLED Montessori Explains How Building Muscle Memory Shapes a Child's Future

SAN ANTONIO, TX, UNITED STATES, July 1, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- If you've ever watched a toddler spend 10 minutes trying to button a shirt or pour water into a tiny cup, it might seem like slow progress. But those moments are the foundation of something bigger: lifelong skills built through repetition and movement.

Melissa Zamora, a veteran [Montessori](#) educator at [ExcelLED Montessori](#) in San Antonio, Texas, has seen this up close for over two decades. "The way a child's hand learns to twist, grip, press, and hold—those aren't small things," she says. "That's how they start learning to write, to build, even to perform complex tasks as adults. It all begins now."

Toddlers at ExcelLED Montessori spend a lot of time doing what looks like play: spooning beans from one bowl to another, scrubbing a table, or using tongs to pick up cotton balls. But these aren't random activities.

"These tasks build muscle memory," Zamora explains. "The small muscles in their fingers and hands start learning patterns. With enough practice, those movements become automatic."

Muscle memory is how we tie shoelaces without thinking or type without looking. In young children, these patterns form quickly—but only if they get the chance to practice.

In ExcelLED Montessori classrooms, Zamora says children are surrounded by materials that invite movement and control. Some examples:



Playing with clothespins helps children develop their motor skills and eye-hand coordination.

- Pouring stations with water, rice, or beads
- Dressing frames that let them practice buttons, zippers, and snaps
- Practical tools like brooms, sponges, and scoops
- Manipulatives like tweezers, clay, and stringing beads



When children master a task—no matter how small—they feel it.

No screens. No plastic toys that light up and do the work for them. Just real, usable tools that help their hands and brains work together.

You might not think of a preschooler as a future surgeon or engineer. But the skills that begin here—steady hands, precise control, focus—are the same skills those careers require.

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MELISSA ZAMORA, EXCELLED  
MONTESSORI SCHOOL

Zamora recalls a moment with a parent who is a surgeon. “He watched his daughter using tweezers to move small beads from one tray to another. He turned to me and said, ‘That's exactly the kind of focus and hand control I need when I'm doing sutures.’ That connection really hit home for both of us.”

ExcelLED teachers observe closely and adapt lessons based on each child's ability. The goal isn't speed. It's control, attention, and care.

There's solid science behind this approach. Studies have found strong links between fine motor development in

preschool and later success in reading, writing, and math. A 2019 article in *Frontiers in Psychology* showed that children with better fine motor skills in early childhood did better academically later on.

Another study from the University of Washington found that motor skills and memory development are closely connected in the early years. In other words, kids who use their hands more also build stronger brains.

When children master a task—no matter how small—they feel it. A two-year-old who learns to zip their own jacket stands a little taller. A child who pours their own milk without spilling feels

proud. These small wins build confidence, which leads to curiosity, independence, and better behavior.

"We want kids to know they're capable," Zamora says. "And the best way to do that is to let them try."

ExcellED Montessori has campuses across the San Antonio area, including Fair Oaks, Boerne, Stone Oak, and the Medical Center. At each site, the focus is the same: let children lead, give them real tools, and create a space where movement is learning.

This isn't about rushing academics or pushing kids too hard. It's about building the skills that last.

"When you see what their hands can do after a few months in the classroom," Zamora says, "you realize these aren't just toddlers anymore. They're capable, focused, and ready for what's next."

About ExcellED Montessori:

ExcellED Montessori is a group of early childhood schools serving families in and around San Antonio. We combine Montessori principles with inquiry-based learning to help every child grow with confidence, curiosity, and care. Learn more at <https://www.excelledschools.com>.

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