

## INTRODUCTION

### Head Start:

- Federally-funded & regulated program providing free services to low-income families<sup>1</sup>
- Local agencies, such as Greater Lawrence Community Action Council (GLCAC), provide educational services to communities<sup>2</sup>



### Greater Lawrence Community Action Council (GLCAC):

- Non-profit, community-based organization serving Greater Lawrence, Merrimack Valley, & North Shore with 5 Head Start locations<sup>3,4</sup>
- A 2023 annual report<sup>4</sup> shares that 524 students were enrolled in Head Start & 64% qualify for services based on public assistance, including:
  - Homelessness
  - Foster care
  - Income below 100% or between 100-130% of federal poverty line
  - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
  - Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

## GAP, ROLE, & AIMS

**Gap:** Staff requested support in curricular activity development of fine motor skills to help students participate in:

- Classroom activities (playing with blocks, playdough)
- Functional tasks (dressing, eating)
- Transition to public kindergarten (prewriting strokes, grip on crayon)

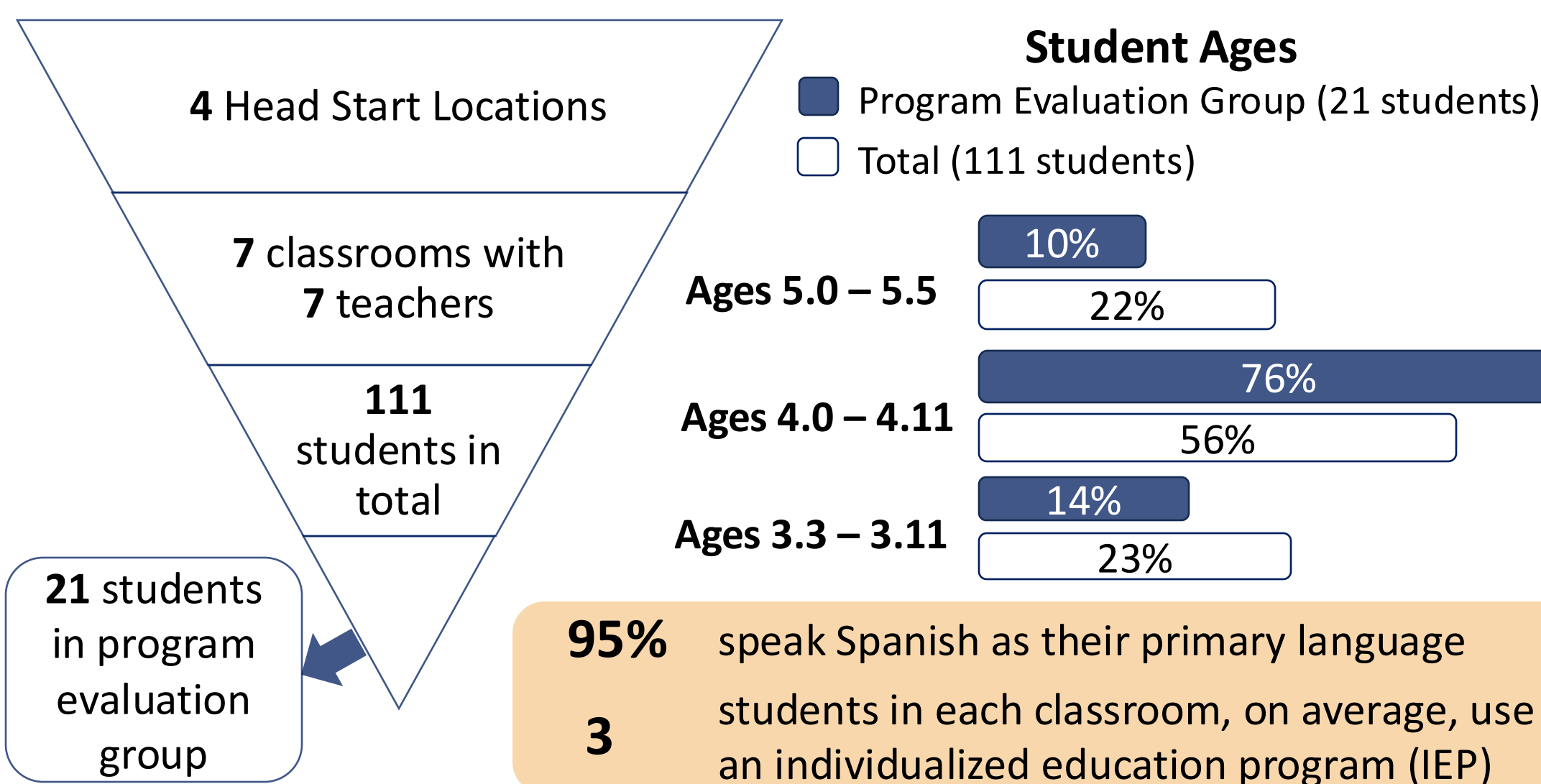
### Occupational Therapy (OT) Student Role:

- Equip classrooms with an activity toolkit, following the National Association for the Education of Young Children<sup>5</sup> no-worksheets policy
- Embed & model fine motor activities to support teachers' understanding of rich fine motor preschool activities<sup>6,7</sup>
- Curate fine motor activities to inform curricular development<sup>8,9,10,11</sup>

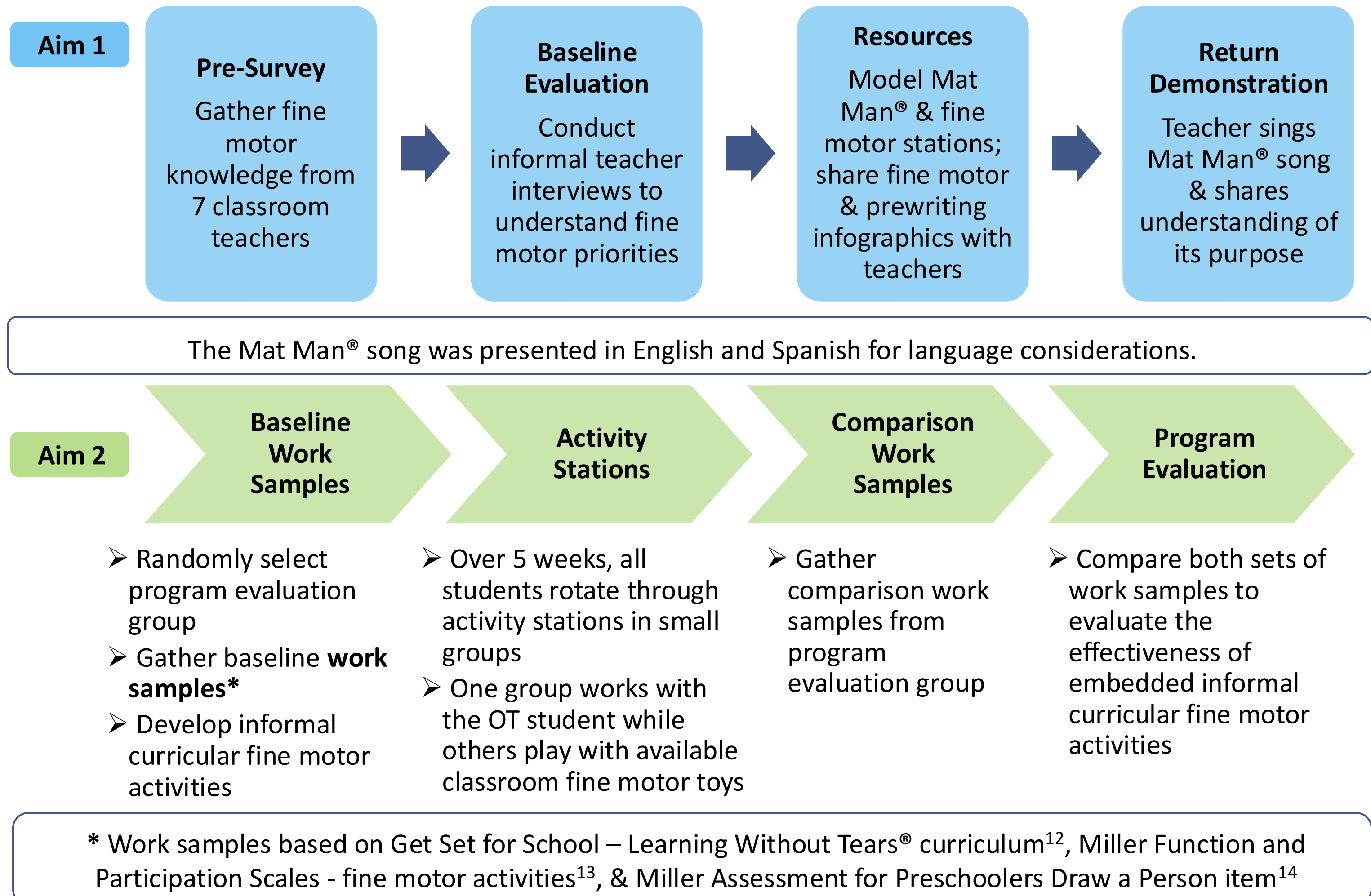
**Aim 1:** Provide teacher resources to promote knowledge of fine motor development & provide classrooms with activity toolkit

**Aim 2:** Support fine motor curricular development in Head Start classrooms through modeling evidence- & play-based activities to improve students' functional independence before the transition to kindergarten

## PARTICIPANTS



## METHODS



## BASELINE PROGRAM EVALUATION DATA & ACTIVITIES

- Baseline program evaluation conducted using functional observation of 7 classrooms, formal teacher surveys, informal teacher interviews, & program evaluation group work samples
- Evaluation focused on fine motor curriculum across daily occupations including **eating, dressing, play & toileting** as well as the occupation of **classroom tasks**<sup>15, 16, 17</sup>

### Aim 1 Evaluation Outcome

Teachers report that most students manage daily occupations well, but classroom tasks remains a key concern for transition to kindergarten

### Aim 2 Evaluation Outcome

Baseline work samples from the program evaluation group reveal difficulty with hand strength, hand coordination, in-hand manipulation, & prewriting skills

### Informal Curricular Fine Motor Activities

- Curricular activities curated to support teachers & to improve students' fine motor skills in the identified areas
- Activities modeled & embedded in stations to support fine motor development



Playdough & Tools



Mat Man®



Bracelets



Paper Folding

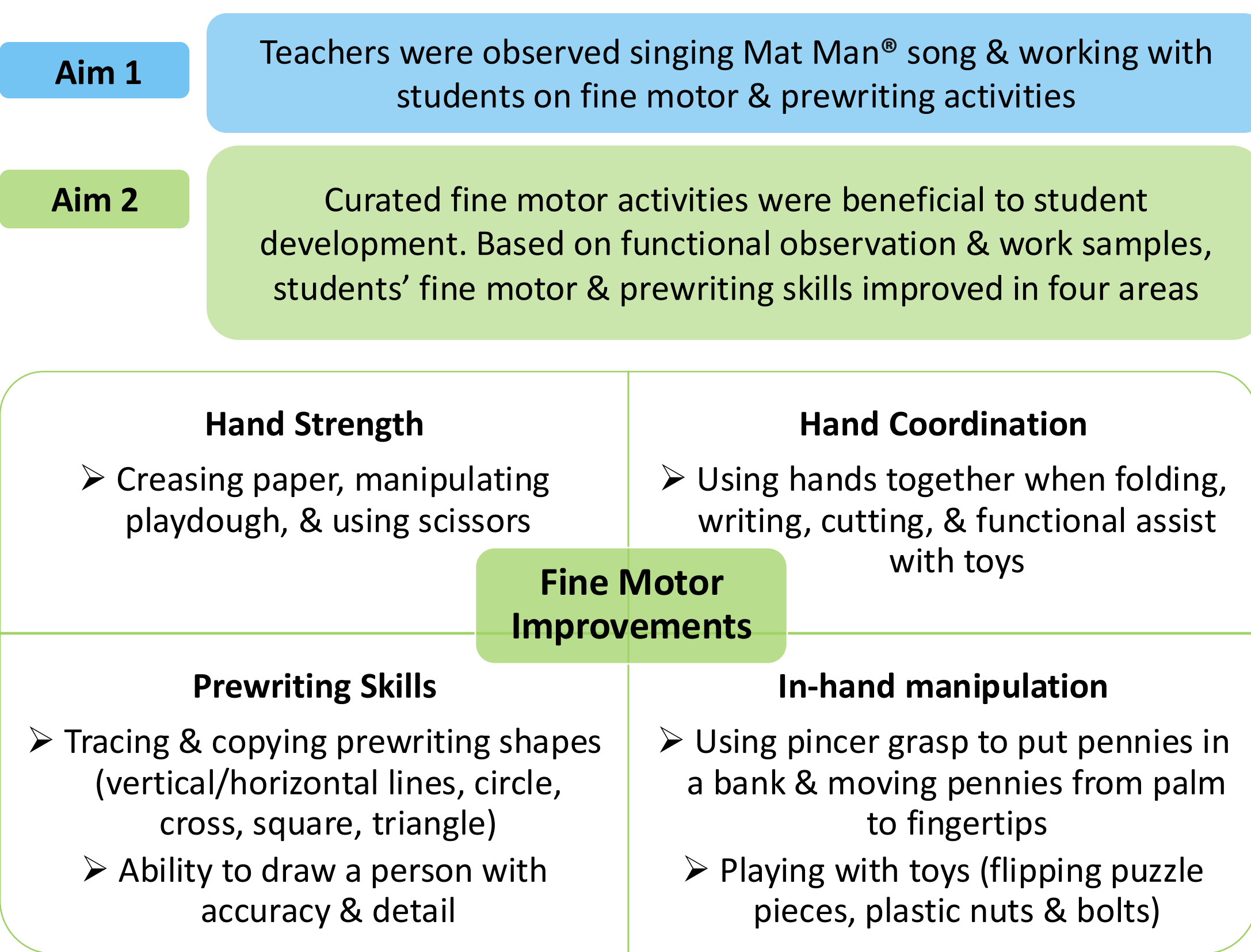


Paper Dolls

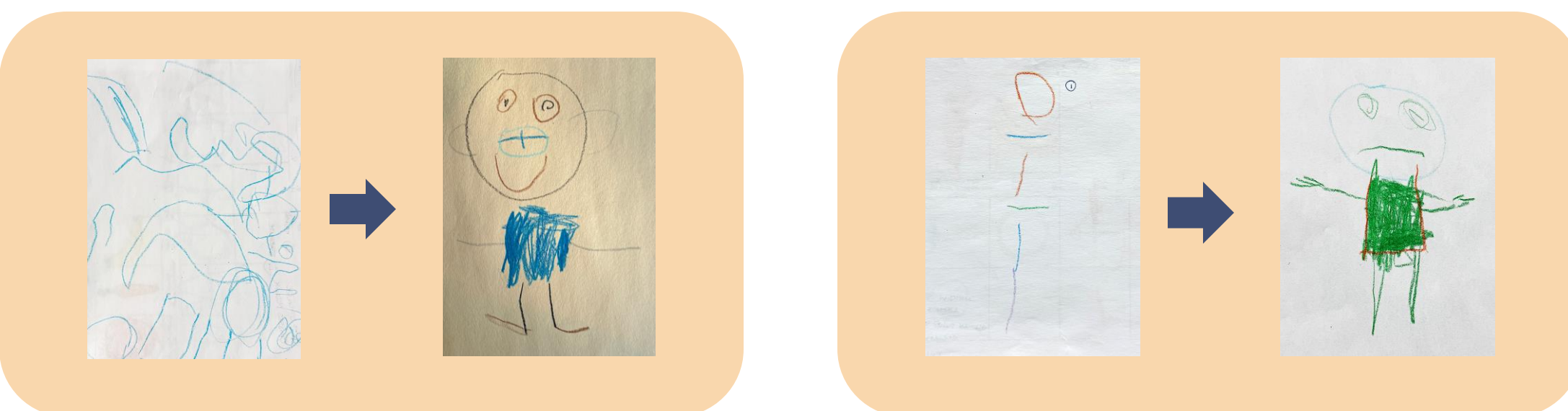
### Desired Fine Motor Improvements

Improvements in the four identified fine motor areas (hand strength, hand coordination, in-hand manipulation, & prewriting skills) will guide activity inclusion in the GLCAC Head Start curriculum

## PROGRAM EVALUATION OUTCOMES



### Work Samples Demonstrating Progress in Person Drawing Skills



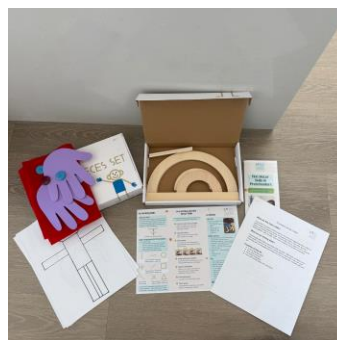
**Limitations** Spanish-English language barrier, curricular activities specific to site

## CONCLUSIONS & DELIVERABLES

- Fine motor skills are crucial to development & participation in daily occupations such as eating, dressing, toileting, & play as well as academic tasks in early childhood classrooms
- Embedding intentional & developmentally appropriate fine motor activities to preschool curriculum is beneficial to develop fine motor & prewriting skills
- Curating fine motor activities & providing teacher resources enriches the curriculum within GLCAC Head Start classrooms

### Deliverables:

- All 7 classrooms received a fine motor toolkit with:
  - Mat Man® pieces
  - Fine motor & prewriting infographics
  - Informal curricular fine motor activity suggestions (1 additional toolkit with GLCAC administration for replication)



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & CONTACTS

Thank you to Martha Torres, Justine Donovan, & the Head Start teachers in the designated classrooms. Your help was much appreciated!

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