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Kindergarten Readiness Guiding Team Meeting  
June 9, 2015

Present: Amanda Lawrence, Alexa Stephens, John Read, Kyle Lahm, Jane Farrell, Adrienne Troy-Frazier, James Ella Collins, Cathy Marino, Sara Perry, James Ella Collins, Richard Wells  
Note Taker: Debbie Mann

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

**Amanda Lawrence**

Amanda welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending the meeting. She then asked that we go around the room and introduce ourselves and share why this topic is so important to us.

**2. Where we are in the TRIP Wheel**

**John Read**

John started by explaining that we don't need to get too involved in the details of the wheel or process, but to keep in mind that it is a discipline to keep the group on track and making effective strides forward. It is meant to be invisible, behind the scenes, and that it is his, Alexa's and the facilitators' function to keep moving the process along. John stated that the group is in good shape. Today, with developing the definition, then the data walk through; the next step is to develop catalytic projects. The definition and the measures as well as the projects can be presented as recommendations at the next Network Meeting, to all come together and proceed on.

He also mentioned that on July 1<sup>st</sup> there will be a "deeper dive" into the TRIP process for facilitators and that all here were welcome to attend.

**3. Defining Kindergarten Readiness (KR)**

Amanda introduced Alexa to give an overview of the research and information on KR definitions. She reminded everyone to think openly as we work to come to a consensus on a definition to recommend to the Network. She also mentioned that it was important to keep in mind that we will need to tie data points back to our definition.

Alexa started by reminding everyone that currently SC does not have a statewide definition of KR. She then went through the following PowerPoint slides (on the next page) to give an overview of KR.

## Kindergarten Readiness

**Goal:** Guiding Team Agreement on Kindergarten Readiness Definition to Recommend to KR network

**Current State:** South Carolina does not have a statewide definition of Kindergarten readiness. Organizations such as Trident United Way, the Institute for Child Success, Children's Trust, among others have been pushing for adoption of a readiness definition.

**Opportunity:** Local definition of kindergarten readiness to bound and guide the work of the Guiding Team and Network.

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## Kindergarten Readiness

### Individual or Holistic?

#### Individual Definition

Emphasis on child's abilities.

#### 5 common dimensions

- Physical & Motor Development
- Social & Emotional Development
- Approaches to Learning
- Language Development
- Cognitive Development

#### Holistic Definition

Combination of individual abilities with social and environmental factors.

#### Ready Child Equation



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# Kindergarten Readiness Definitions Review

## A Review of Kindergarten Readiness Definitions

Readiness for school includes 3 components: 1) children's readiness to participate in classroom and learning experiences; 2) school readiness to respond to enrolled children; and 3) family and community resources and services that support and promote learning.

Dimension/Definition	Children's Readiness for School	Schools' Readiness for Children	Family & Community Readiness
<b>Dimension: Physical Wellbeing/Motor Development</b>			
Commonly defined as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Health Status</li> <li>- Physical abilities</li> <li>- Nutrition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participate in medical home and up-to-date Immunizations;</li> <li>- Developmentally appropriate fine and gross motor skills</li> <li>- Provided adequate nutrition; knowledge of wellness</li> <li>-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Physical activities; health and wellness education</li> <li>- Nutrition; Wellness education</li> <li>- Identification/support of students that are at-risk of or with special needs</li> <li>- Parent involvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parent engagement and family supports for healthy growth and development</li> <li>- Community access to healthcare /medical homes; adequate prenatal, medical care; health education;</li> <li>- Access to adequate (affordable, healthy) nutrition</li> <li>- Identification/support of students that are at-risk of or with special needs</li> <li>- Home visiting programs</li> </ul>

Dimension

Basic definition

Sample descriptions

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Alexa then asked the Guiding Team members two questions for discussion:

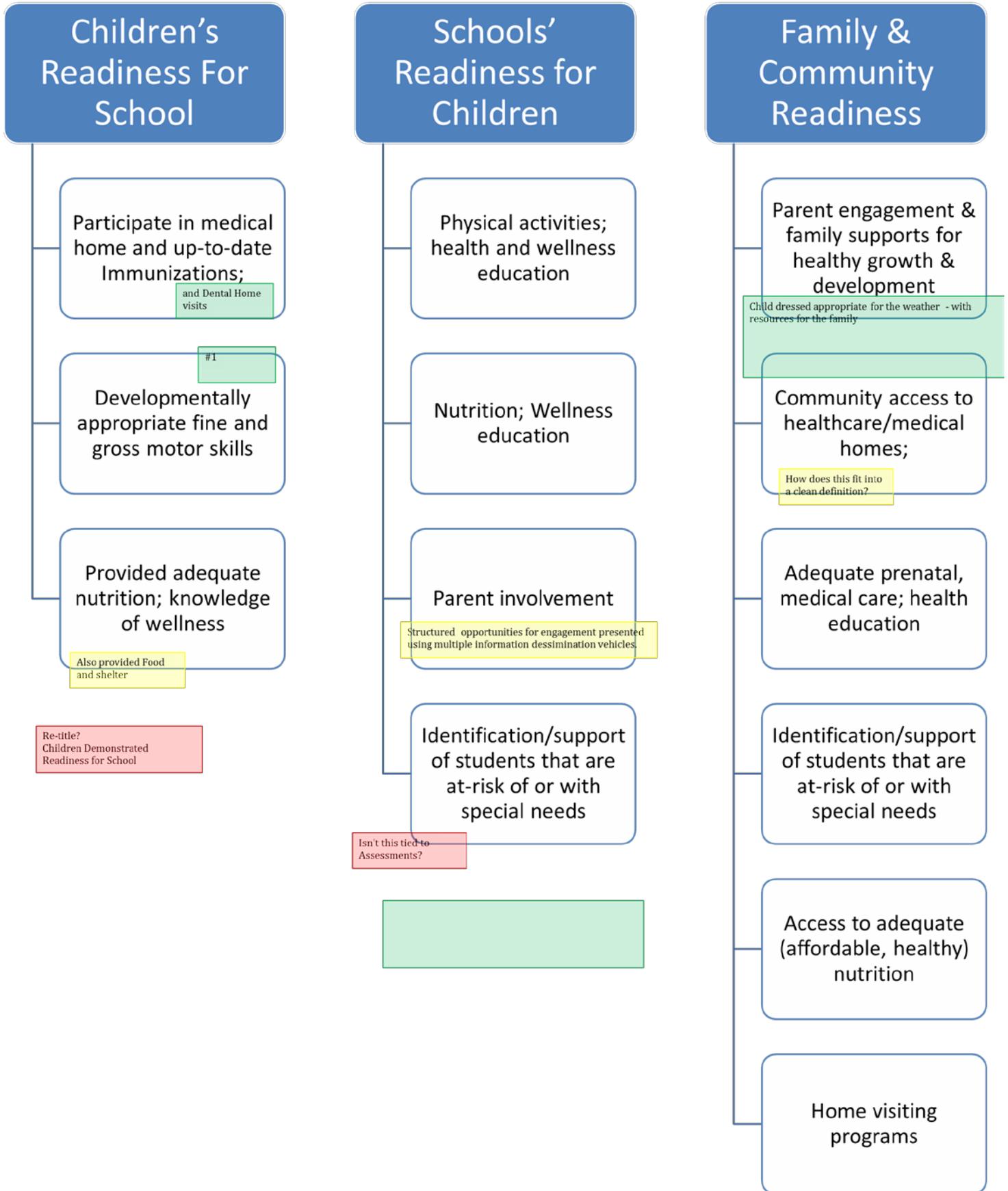
Which definition type (individual or holistic) is most reflective of your understanding of kindergarten readiness?

Thoughts on KR definition elements table?

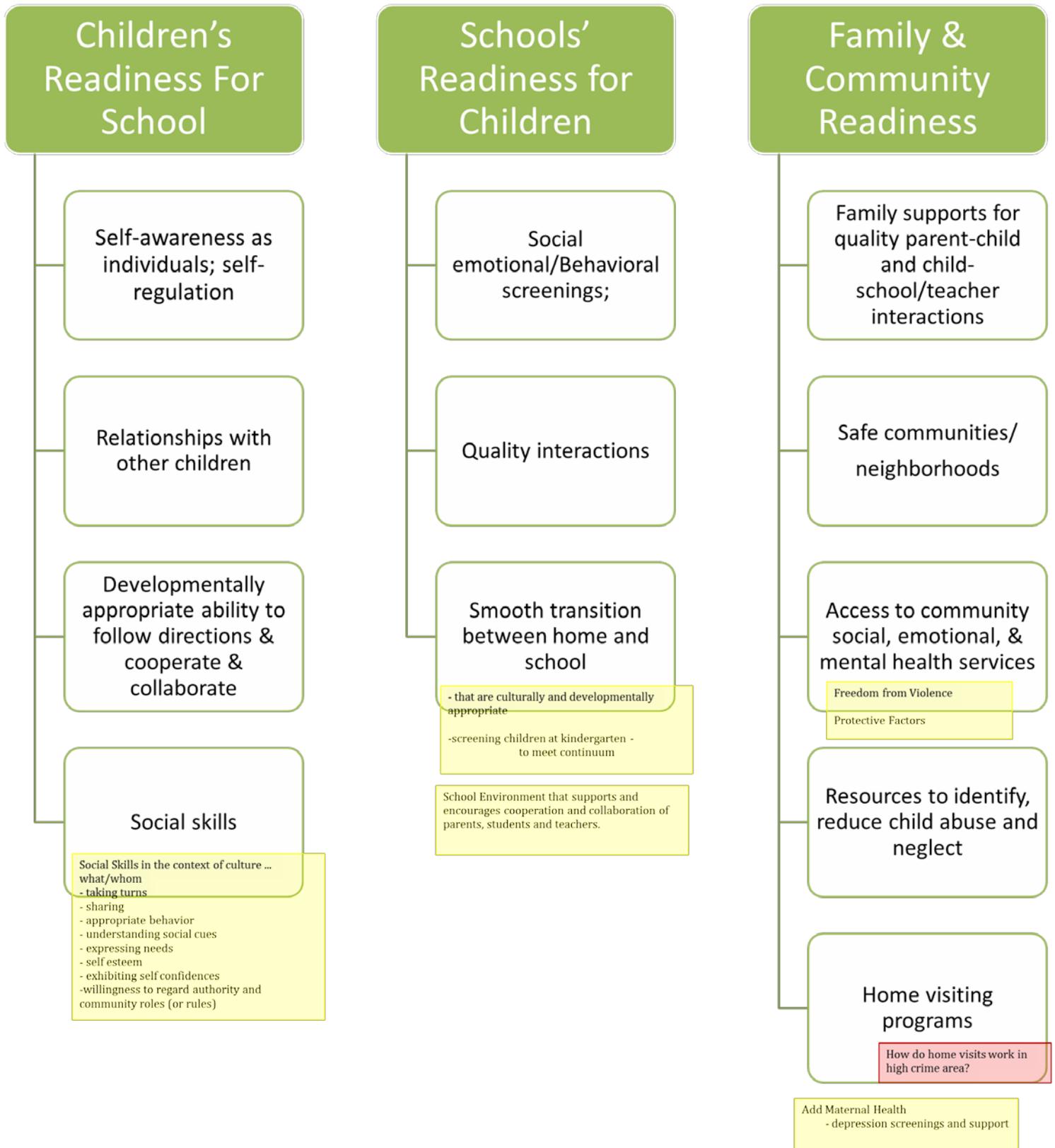
- Is it meaningful/reasonable?
- What's missing?

Richard then introduced an exercise that would further inform the discussion. Alexa had prepared posters for each of the 5 dimensions of KR, listing attributes and examples. They were placed around the room. Each person was asked to review the posters and rate and/or make comments via sticky notes. Green indicating that you agree with this element and think it is important, Red/Pink indicating there is some concern or discussion that is required, and yellow for all additional comments. On the next pages are the results:

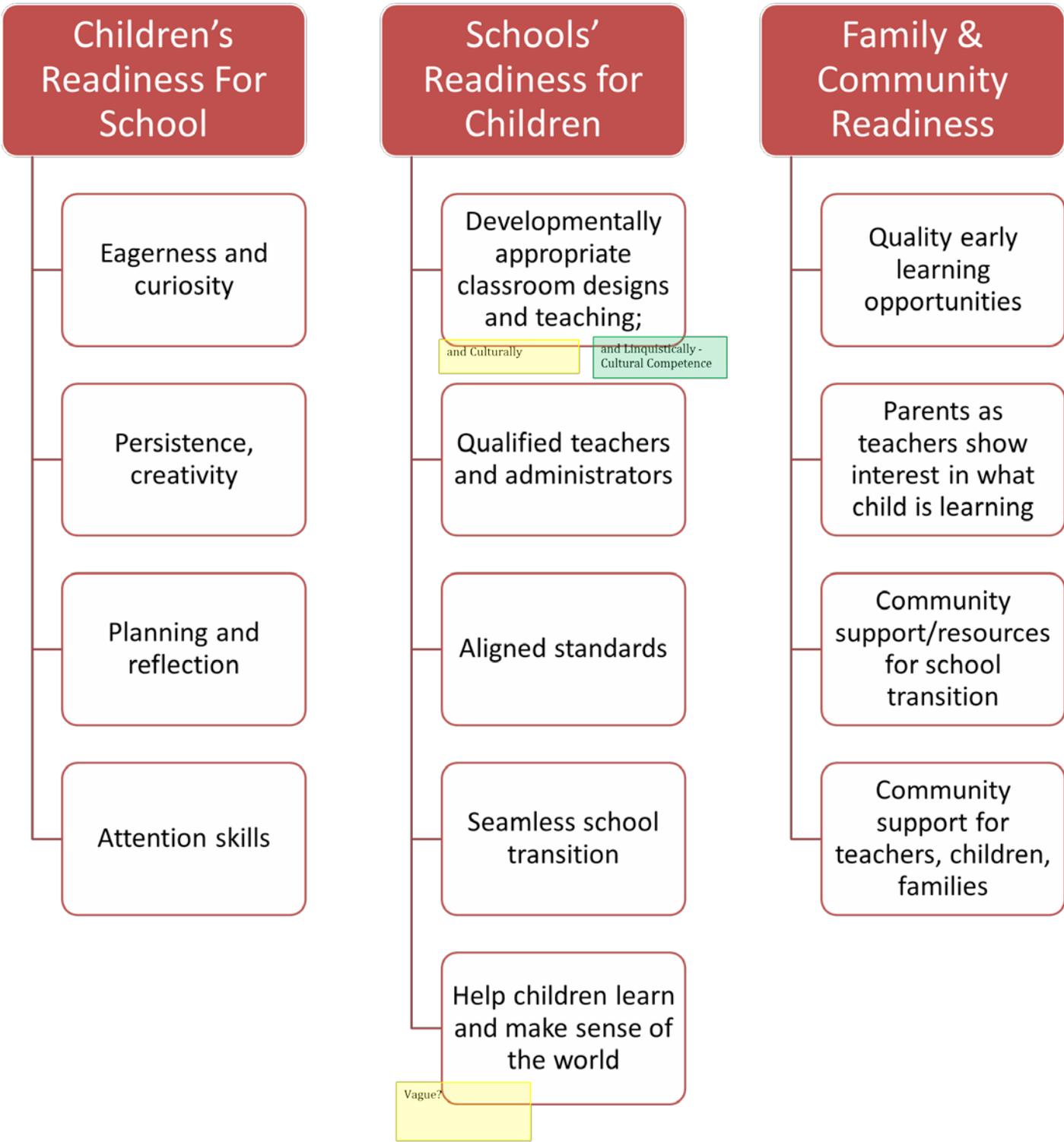
# Physical Wellbeing & Motor Development



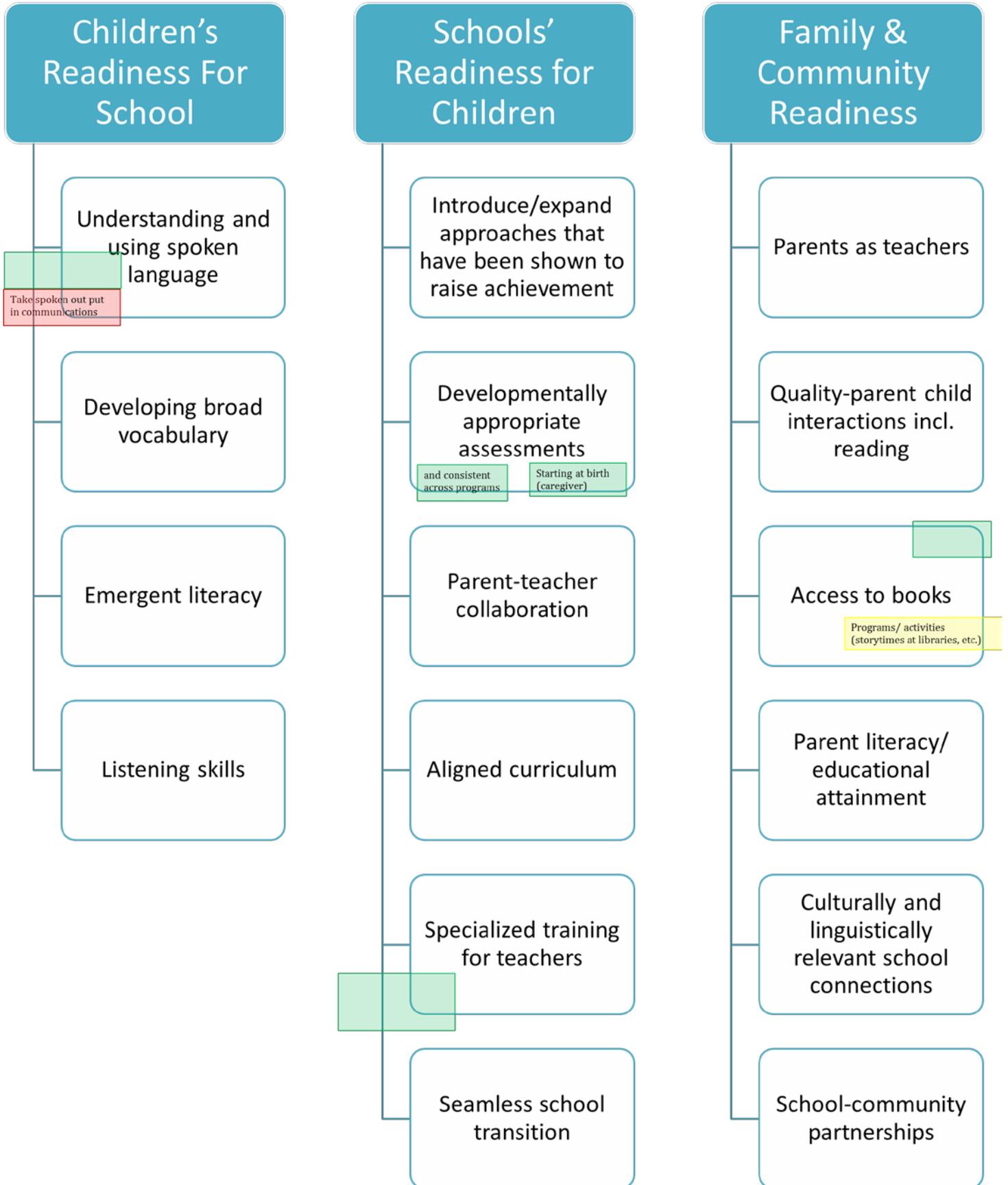
# Social & Emotional Development



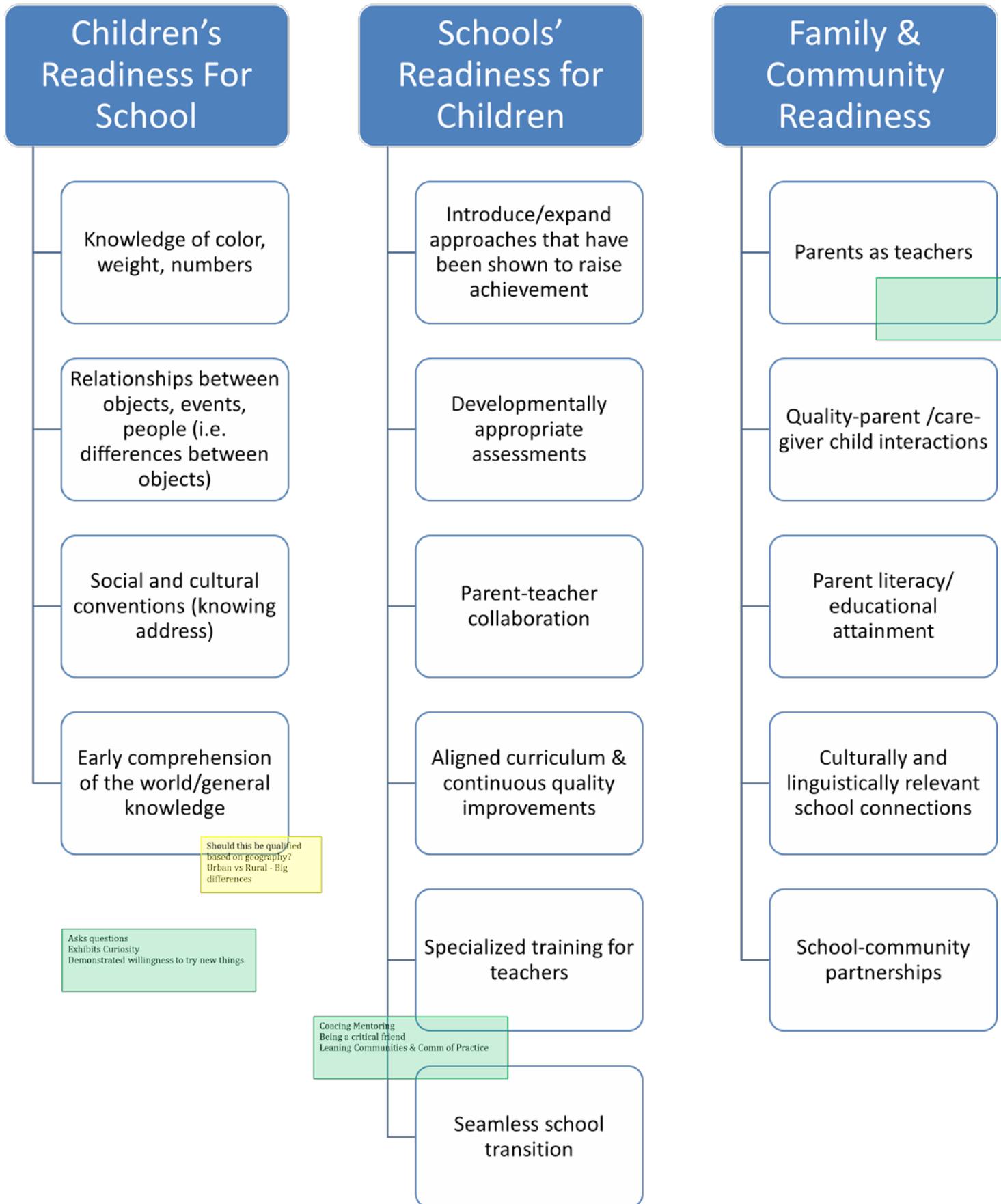
# Approaches to Learning



# Language Development



# Cognition & General Knowledge



The discussion that followed included points of emphasis on:

- Adding Dental Care to Medical health
- Development of fine and gross motor skills
- Child having shelter and adequate nutrition
- Importance of Parent Involvement
  - Structured
  - Spans all domains
  - Parent activities led by parents/peers
- Parents' role in health of child
- Developing assessments
  - Start at birth
  - Be culturally inclusive
- Develop appropriate and consistent language at birth
- Access to books and read-a-loud/storytime programs; books free of stereotypes/bias
- Qualified teachers and administrators
  - Including cultural competence and sensitivity
  - Speak child's language
- Early comprehension of the world/general knowledge
  - Urban vs rural considerations
  - Difficult to have common assessment tool with such diversity
- Specialized Training
  - Learning community for teachers
  - How to be "coaches" or "special friends"
- School's readiness – need supports in place
- Community & Family Readiness
  - Add Maternal Health and Pre-natal
- Need to provide KR information packet for community members

After discussion of the posters, ratings and comments, there was agreement that the 5 dimensions are part of the definition. There was also discussion on some of the commonalities across the dimensions; i.e. Parent/ Caregiver support – all children need, but not all children need home visits.

After some discussion, it was decided to try to write a broad or general definition statement on KR based on the discussion and using the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) "Where We Stand on School Readiness position statement.\*

Quote from the NAEYC: "School readiness involves more than just children. School readiness, in the broadest sense, is about children, families, early environments, schools,

and communities. Children are not innately “ready” or “not ready” for school. Their skills and development are strongly influenced by their families and through their interactions with other people and environments before coming to school.”\*

Draft definition for KR by the Guiding Team:

Kindergarten readiness is about children, families, early care and educational environments, schools and communities.

- Families and caregivers need to encourage the physical, social and emotional, cognitive, and language development of their child from prenatal on.
- Communities need to make available resources and institutions that will promote and support a child’s development.
- Schools must be prepared to reach out to children and their families with a child-centered, developmentally appropriate curriculum for the community and the cultures it serves.

It was also discussed that in order to best express Kindergarten Readiness, in addition to the broad definition, there needs to be an accompanying document that details the elements and examples specifically as to what KR means. It was also suggested that we put the main points into a visual or graphic display to make it more understandable to all types of learners, as this is a very complex and multifaceted concept; possibly a tree or wheel image.

#### **4. Next Steps**

It was decided that the Guiding Team will meet again on June 29<sup>th</sup>, 8:30 – 10:30am at Trident United Way to do a Data Walk on KR in order to finalize the KR definition and the visuals to recommend to the Network.

At that time, the GT will turn to ideas for Catalytic Project(s) to recommend at the next Network meeting.

*\*The full NAEYC position statement “School Readiness” is available online at [www.naeyc.org/positionstatement/school\\_readiness](http://www.naeyc.org/positionstatement/school_readiness)*