



STARTING STRONG IV

Monitoring quality in early childhood education
and care (ECEC)

Main findings for Slovenia

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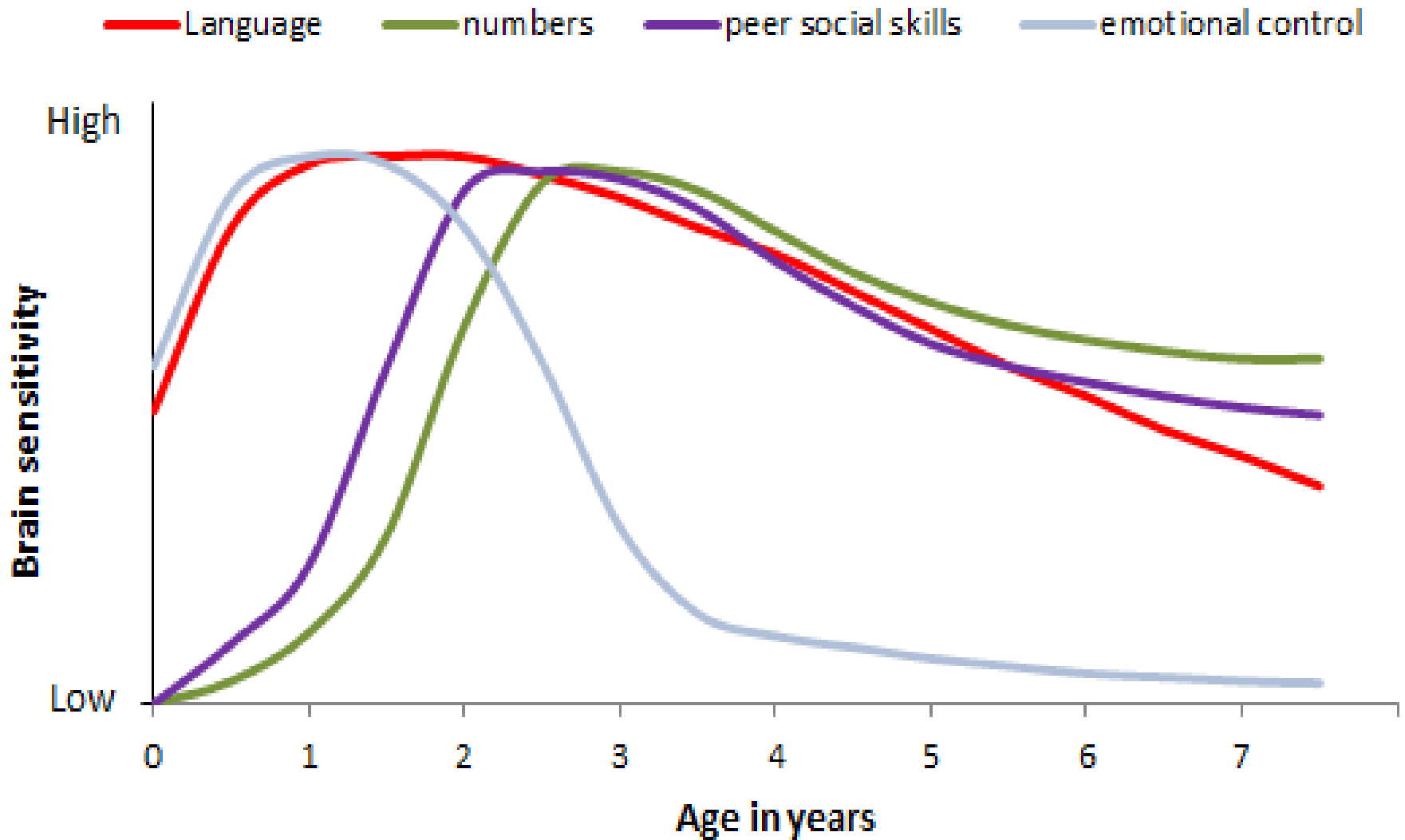


Outline

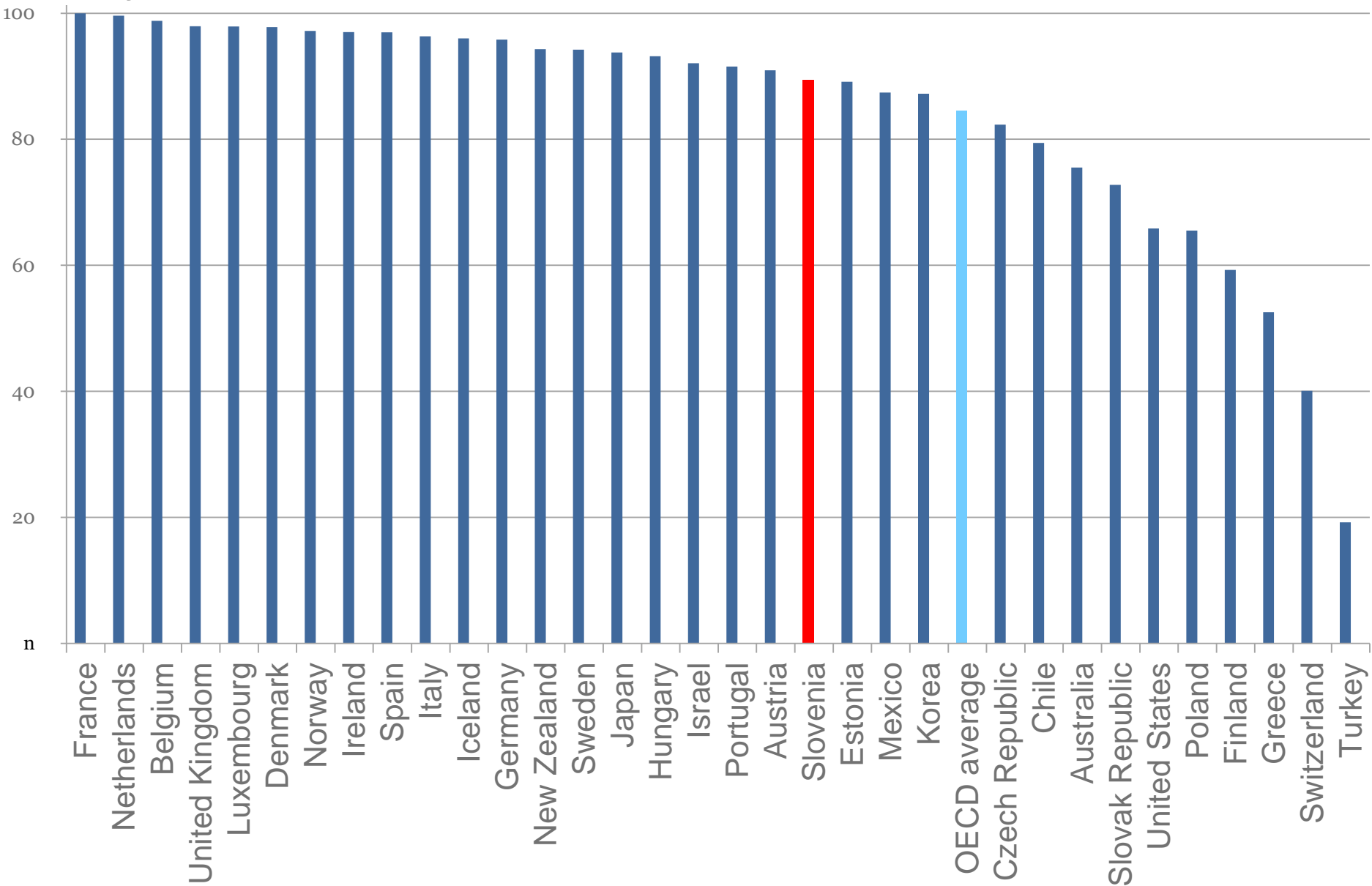
- Scene-setting : policy drivers for monitoring quality in ECEC
- Current state of play in monitoring
- Monitoring service quality
- Monitoring staff quality
- Monitoring child development



Children's brain sensitivity, by age



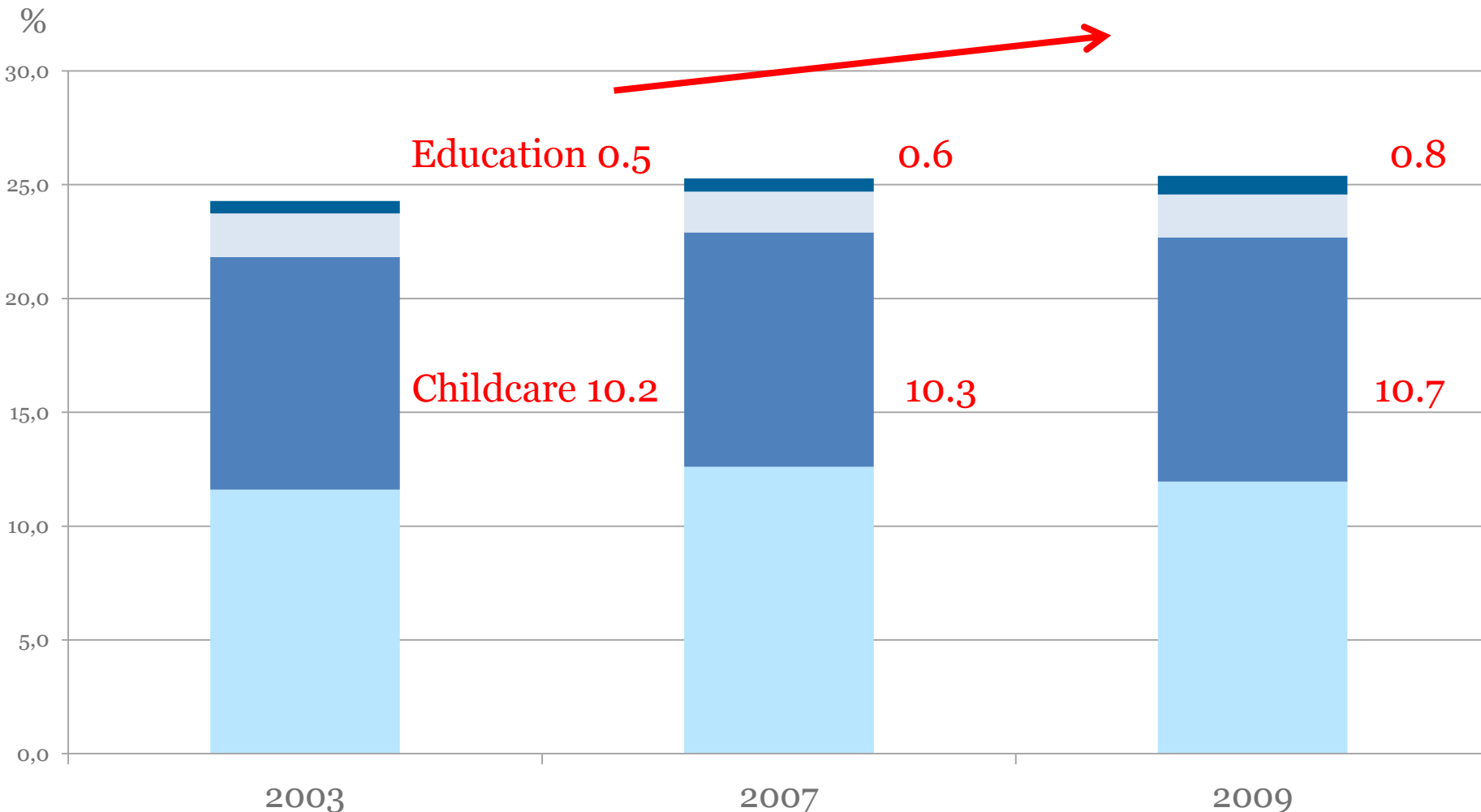
Enrolment at age 4 is also becoming universal in many OECD countries.





Public spending on children from age 0-5 is on the increase

■ Education ■ Other benefits in kind ■ Childcare ■ Cash benefits and tax breaks



Source: OECD Family Database



Current state of play in monitoring (1/3)

- Funding of monitoring systems mostly public, sources by different levels of government
 - In Slovenia: mainly from national government, as in other OECD countries
- Monitoring quality is mostly done by public institutions or agencies such as ministries of education or inspectorates
 - In Slovenia monitoring of integrated ECEC settings is conducted by the Inspectorate for Education and Sport, the Health Inspectorate, the National Education Institute
- In decentralised systems, local authorities play a key role in monitoring



Current state of play in monitoring (2/3)

- Most commonly monitored are service quality and staff quality (all 24) – child outcomes less frequently (21)
- In Slovenia: service quality and staff performance monitored in child minding services and integrated kindergartens, while child outcomes only in integrated kindergarten settings
- Areas of monitoring are integrated: Monitoring service quality, staff quality and child outcomes are usually not monitored independently



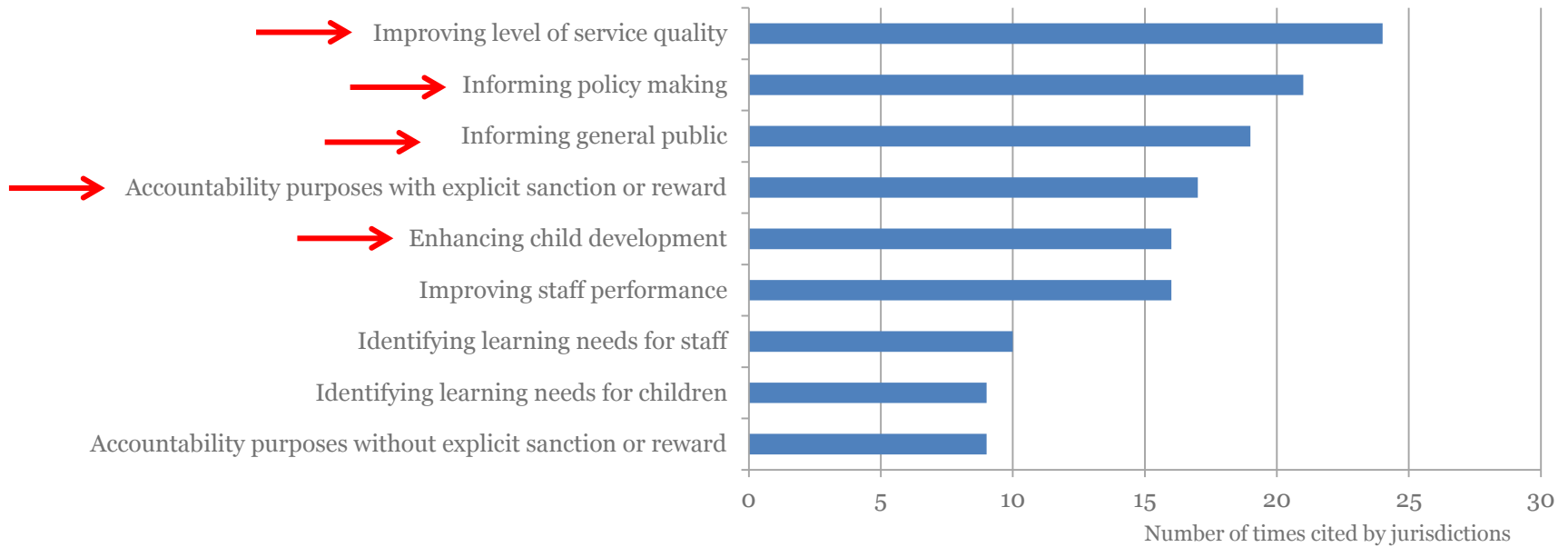
Current state of play in monitoring (3/3)

- Wide differences in approaches to monitoring and which tools are used
- Structural aspects/ regulation compliance: most frequently monitored, but increasing attention to monitoring process quality – similar trend is observed in Slovenia
- In Slovenia, inspectors must pass an exam and receive on-the-job training (most common: 17/24). Also internal assessors are trained for their task which is far less common than training external evaluators (10/24).
- Countries are increasingly applying a common approach to monitoring across different types of ECEC provision (e.g. via a framework) – In Slovenia, the monitoring procedure for kindergartens is aligned with primary school
- The results of monitoring quality, and service quality in particular, are becoming increasingly available to the public – as well in Slovenia for generic results



Monitoring service quality - purposes

Mainly monitored to i) enhance the level of quality in settings; ii) inform policy makers and the general public about the state of ECEC in their country





Monitoring service quality - implementation

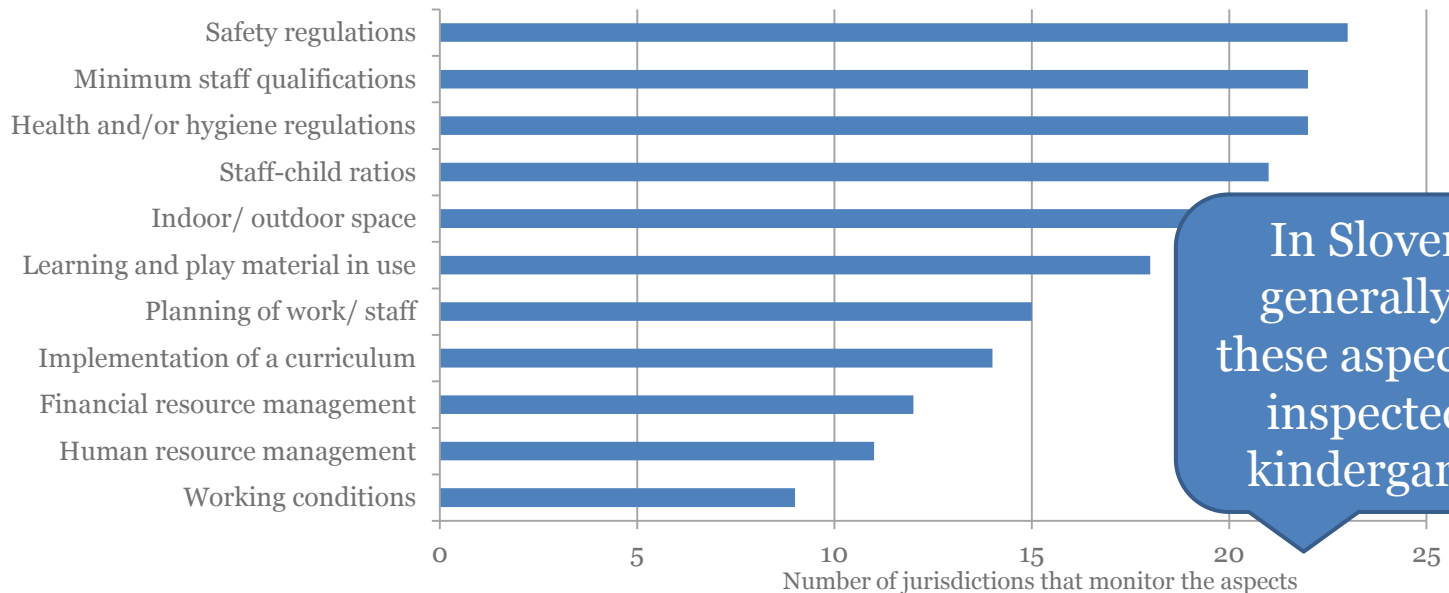
- Inspections (24/24) and self-evaluations (19/24) are most common, parental surveys less popular (15/24)
- In Slovenia, all 3 practices are conducted in kindergartens although parental surveys not at national level
- Frequency of monitoring service quality internally or externally is not regulated in most countries – usually depends on last monitoring result
- In Slovenia, inspections of kindergartens take place every 5 years, self-assessments in kindergartens take place yearly.
- Service quality results have to be made public in most countries (16), although in Slovenia only general or aggregated results are shared rather than the results of individual settings



Monitoring service quality – what is monitored?

Inspections focus largely on regulatory aspects, such as staff-child ratios, safety regulations, minimum staff qualifications, health and hygiene regulations, and minimum standards for space

Service quality aspects inspected in **child care and nursery settings** (or integrated settings for countries with an integrated system)



In Slovenia, generally, all these aspects are inspected in kindergartens



Monitoring service quality – what is monitored?

- Parental surveys mostly ask (also in Slovenia) about overall satisfaction with service quality, the quality of the room settings and the building, parental views on the quality of instruction and caring, possibilities for parental involvement, and how well the child is developing according to parents.
- Parental surveys are usually implemented at local or setting level – which is the case in Slovenia. Frequencies differ according to setting since it is not a mandatory exercise.
- Self-evaluations focus on collaboration and communication between staff and parents, with management, and among colleagues, and assess what can be improved – In Slovenia focus is broader.
- Self-evaluations are usually done at setting level and frequency is usually not regulated, but rather depends on how staff performed during his/her last evaluation



Monitoring service quality – how?

Inspections

- Observations, interviews and analysis of internal documentation are used by 87,5% of jurisdictions
- In addition, Slovenia uses surveys and checklists

- Surveys and results of self-evaluations (by two-thirds) are fairly often used
- Rating scales and survey results (conducted by evaluators, staff/management or parents) are less popular



Monitoring service quality – how?

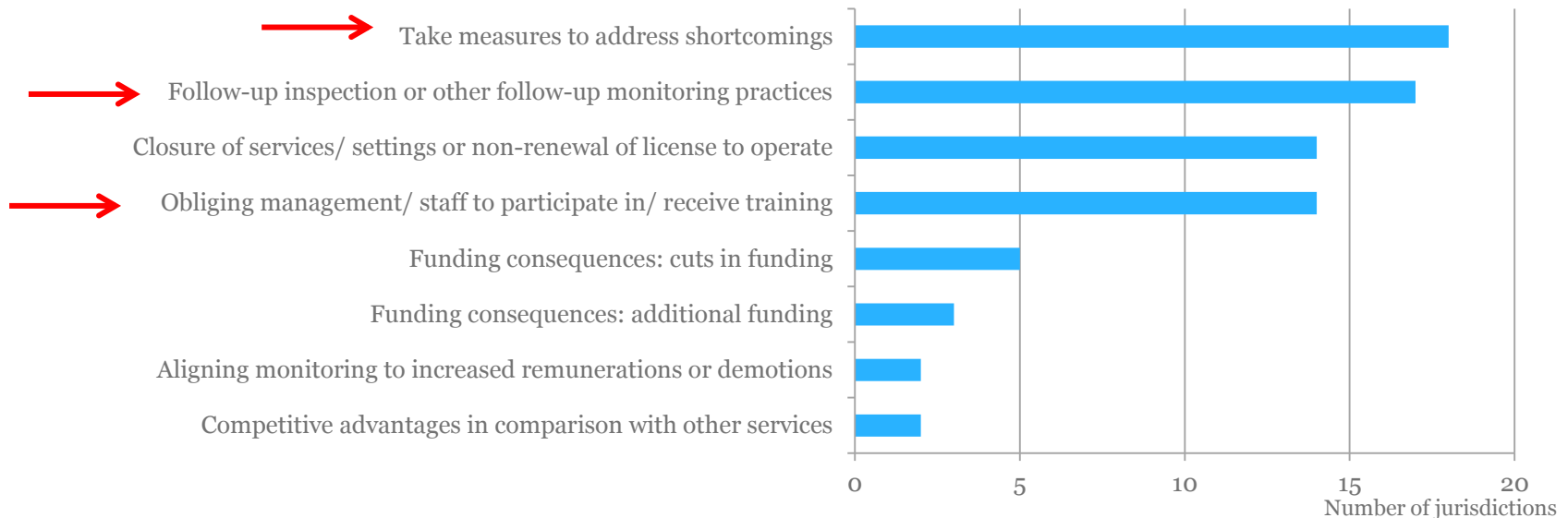
Self-evaluations

- Self-reported surveys, self-reflection reports or journals, and checklists are often used (by 12/19)
- A little less than half have use portfolios (8/19)
- Video feedback not often used (3/19)
- In Slovenia, the use of self-evaluation tools varies between kindergartens.



Monitoring service quality - consequences

Most common consequence of monitoring results is: i) centre or staff must take measures to address shortcomings; ii) follow-up inspections or other monitoring practices, or in extreme cases; iii) close-down or denied renewal of license to operate





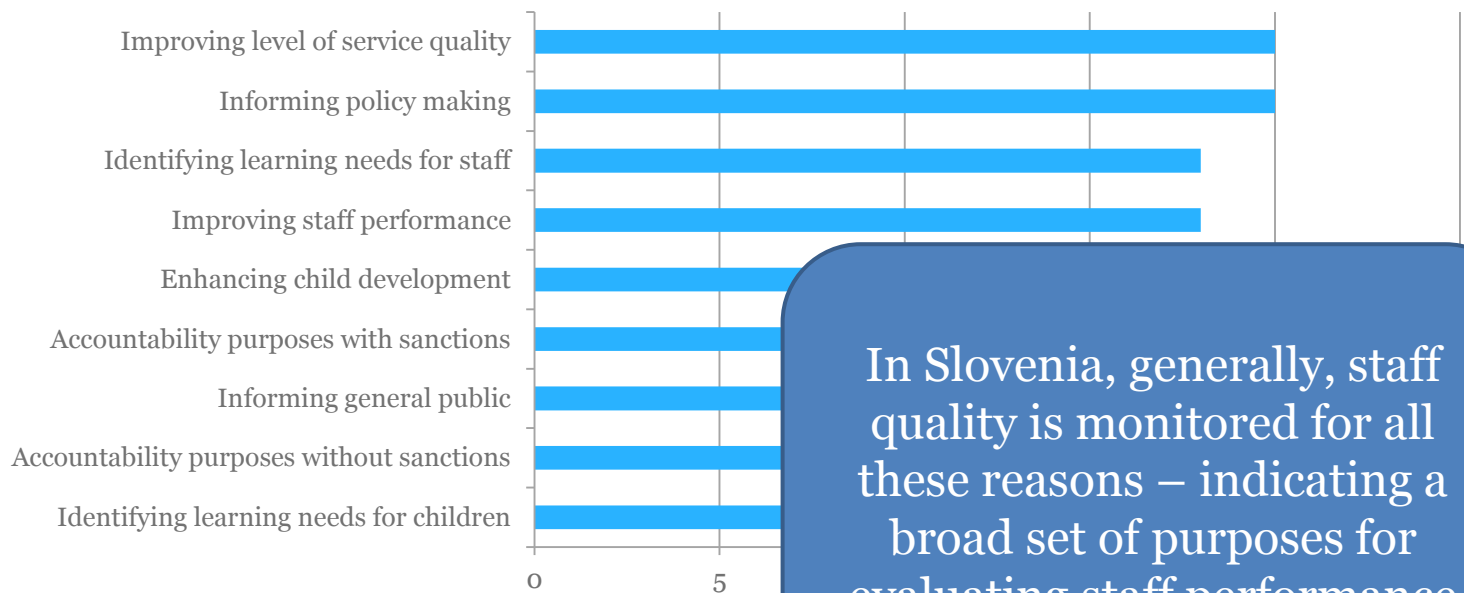
Monitoring service quality - challenges

- Defining the aspects monitored in service quality:
 - Combining monitoring structural and process quality aspects
 - Consulting with stakeholders
- Consistent implementation of monitoring procedures and practices:
 - Providing pre-service training for external assessors
 - Providing on-the-job/in-service training
 - Providing specific training on implementation
 - Linking external and internal evaluations
- Ensuring that staff are aware of quality standards:
 - Disseminating the quality standards that are being monitored widely



Monitoring staff quality - purposes

***Staff quality is monitored to i) enhance the level of service quality;
ii) inform policy making and; iii) identify learning needs and
improve staff performance***



In Slovenia, generally, staff quality is monitored for all these reasons – indicating a broad set of purposes for evaluating staff performance



Monitoring staff quality - implementation

- Inspections (22/24) and self-evaluations (20/24) are most common
- Parental surveys (13/24) and staff testing (1/24) are less popular
- Peer reviews are more commonly used internally (10/24) than externally (6/24)
- In Slovenia, inspections are used in kindergartens and childminding
- Parental surveys, self-assessments and peer reviews can be used in kindergartens although not necessarily at national level

- Frequency of monitoring staff quality internally or externally is not regulated in most countries, especially not for internal practices
- In Slovenia, the head of the kindergarten is responsible for self-assessments and should be implemented once every year
- Frequency of inspections usually depends on last monitoring result, as is the case in Slovenia. Otherwise, inspections once every 5 years



Monitoring staff quality - implementation

- Overall, the general results of staff quality are shared with the public (14/19), including in Slovenia, but individual staff performance evaluations are not widely available for reasons of confidentiality
- In Norway, Kazakhstan and Flemish Community of Belgium results are available on request
- In France, Italy, Mexico, New Zealand, and Scotland results remain internal



Monitoring staff quality – what is monitored?

- Inspections tend to focus on: staff qualifications, the overall quality of care and instruction, and the implementation of curriculum (80% or more do so) – which are also focus areas in Slovenia
- Time management, the use of materials, as well as process quality are also often monitored – including in Slovenia
- Management and leadership and communication between staff and parents, are least frequently inspected, followed by the staff's mastery of the subjects they are teaching
- In Slovenia, management and leadership are monitored as are working conditions
- In 50% of jurisdictions, child development outcomes are taken into account in monitoring staff quality but not in Slovenia



Monitoring staff quality – what is monitored?

- Parental surveys: in 75% of jurisdictions, these surveys tend to ask about parents' opinion of the overall quality of the staff, the curriculum, and their communication with the ECEC staff
- This is similar in Slovenia, although parental surveys do not generally ask about curriculum but rather about process quality
- Child development is less frequently a topic in the survey but is in Slovenia
- Parent surveys rarely ask about the leadership and management of the setting as well as teamwork between ECEC staff, the planning processes, and use of materials although the latter 2 can be included in Slovenia
- Surveys almost always implemented at setting level and is usually a voluntary practice, although commonly implemented in all jurisdictions



Monitoring staff quality – what is monitored?

- Countries that use peer reviews (internal and external) all monitor the overall quality of staff practices and curriculum implementation including in Slovenia
- 90% of these countries also focus the reviews on teamwork and communication, as well as process quality, including Slovenia
- Peer reviews also pay attention to the staff's knowledge of subject matter (but not in Slovenia), as well as to professional development opportunities (also in Slovenia)
- Least frequently reviewed are management and leadership skills, although these are important for organising activities and running settings smoothly. This is also not monitored in Slovenia



Monitoring staff quality – what is monitored?

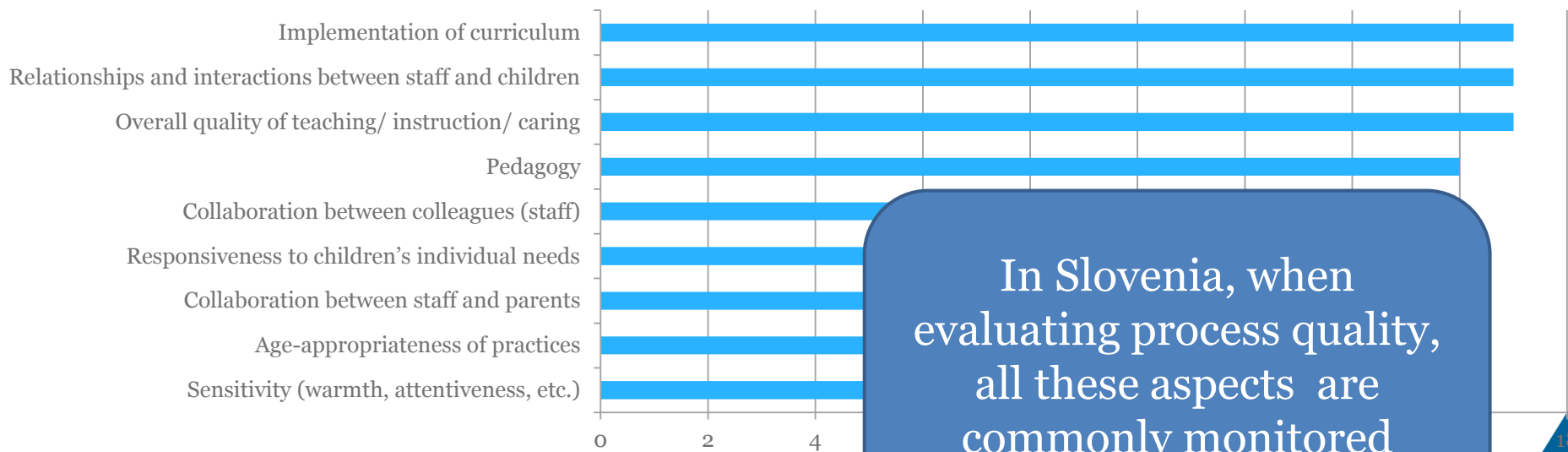
- Many self-evaluations focus on the staff's communication skills, including communication between staff (17/20) and communication with parents (15/20) which is the case in Slovenia
- 75% of self-evaluations in jurisdictions (including Slovenia) also commonly evaluate the use of materials and the implementation of the curriculum
- 14/20 jurisdictions (including Slovenia) have staff evaluate their own caring and teaching skills, and management and leadership skills
- It is highly uncommon that self-evaluations are based on child developmental outcomes – this is also not done in Slovenia
- Self-evaluations are implemented and usually designed at the setting level



Process quality – what is monitored?

There is little difference in focus areas of monitoring process quality between integrated, care-focused or early education-focused settings

Process quality aspects monitored in pre-primary education (or integrated settings)



In Slovenia, when evaluating process quality, all these aspects are commonly monitored except for sensitivity



Monitoring staff quality – how?

Inspections usually involve a mix of instruments:

- Interviews (19/22), observations (18) and analysis of internal documentation (18) are the most frequently used instruments – interviews and analysis is used in Slovenia
- Results of self-evaluations, which are often conducted before an inspection takes place, are also commonly considered, including Slovenia
- Checklists and surveys made by the inspectors are also fairly popular (12/22) – also in Slovenia
- Less frequently used tools include surveys conducted by management and staff, or parent surveys – although the latter are commonly used in Slovenia



Monitoring staff quality – how?

Peer reviews:

- The instruments most commonly used by jurisdictions are observations of staff practices and approaches, interviews, results of surveys conducted by management and/or staff, as well as reviewing portfolios
- In Slovenia, observations are the common tool
- Surveys undertaken by the inspector, analysis of internal documentation, and checklists are not commonly used in peer reviews
- Video feedback is rarely used and when it is, it is not common practice in all peer reviews



Monitoring staff quality – how?

Self-evaluations:

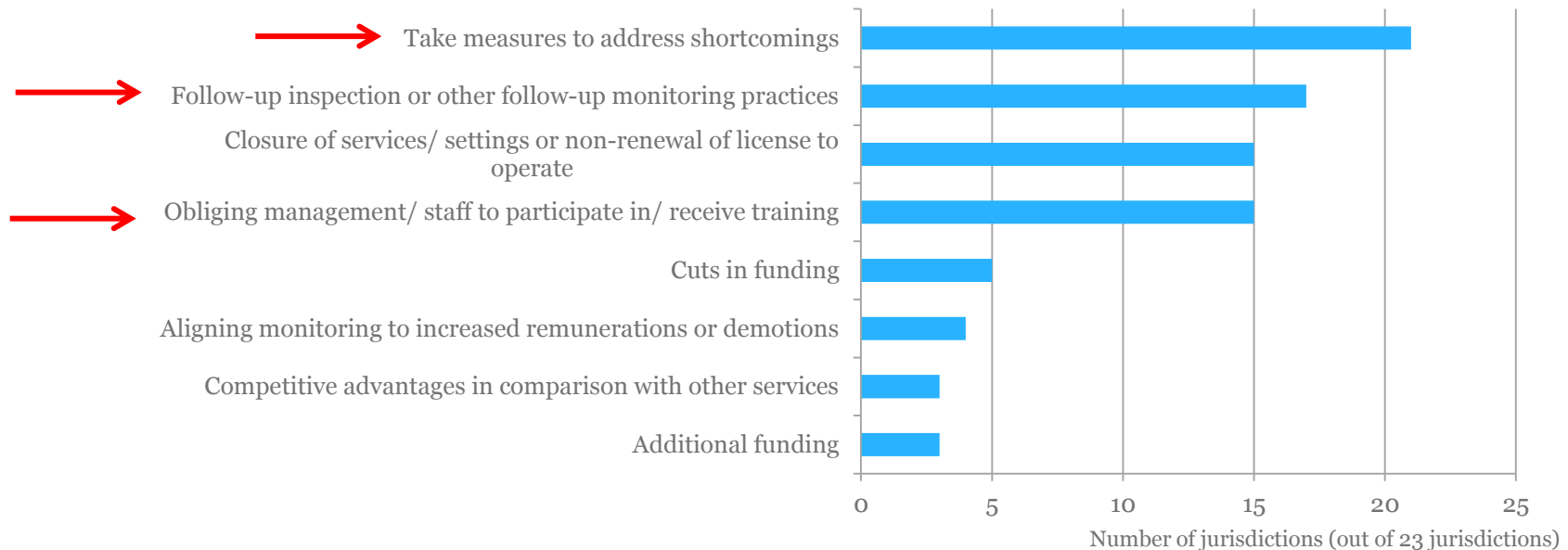
- In half of jurisdictions, self-reflection reports or journals, and self-reported surveys are frequently used – including Slovenia
- Only a minority of countries (4) use video feedback and it is not widespread in these countries – also not in Slovenia
- Self-evaluation tools vary widely among services, since settings are typically free to choose the tools they use in self-evaluations
- Self-evaluations are often not obligatory, although they are frequently conducted



Monitoring staff quality - consequences

It is common that settings/staff have to address their shortcomings after a staff monitoring practice, comply with follow-up monitoring exercises, and that staff/management should take up on training

Consequences of monitoring early childhood education and care staff





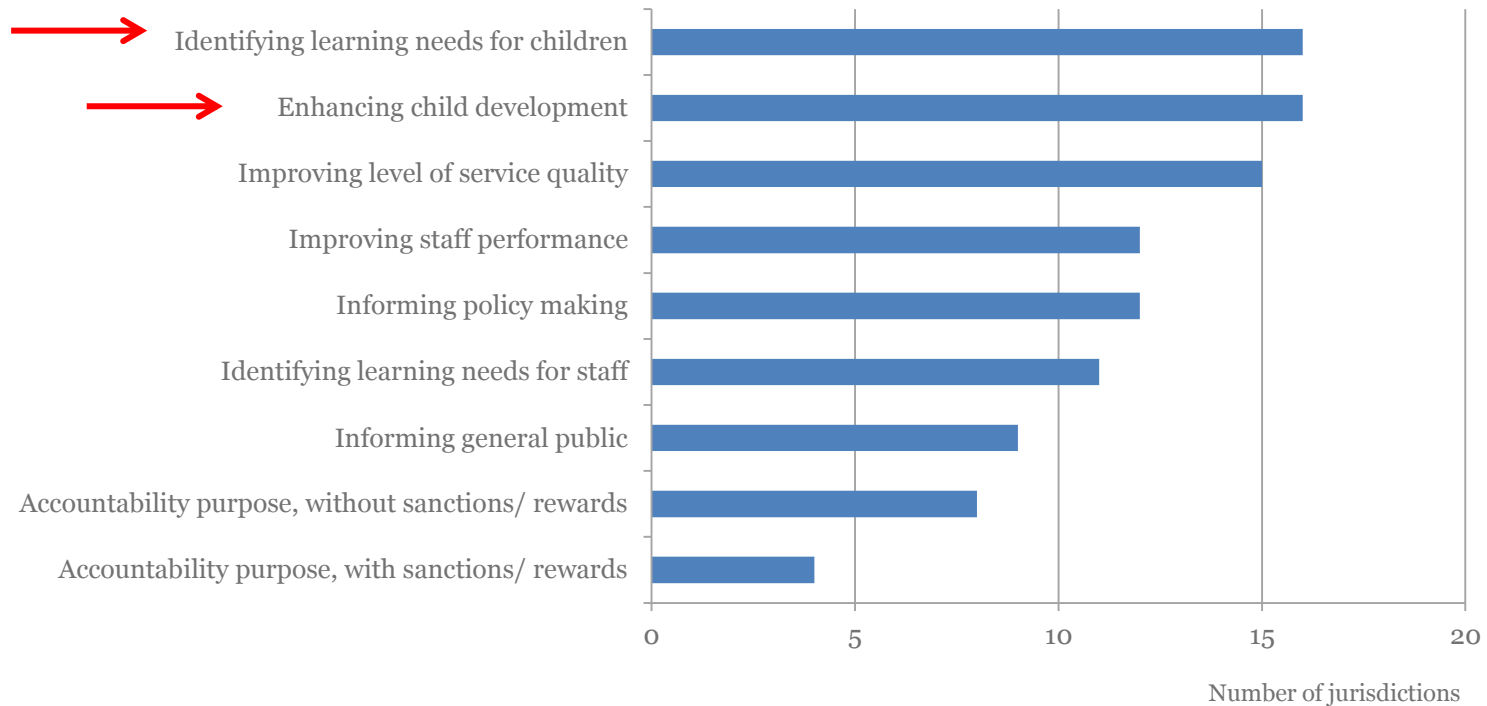
Monitoring staff quality - challenges

- Ensuring that monitoring staff quality leads to improvements:
 - Using measures to address shortcomings
 - Identifying staff needs for further learning or training
- Monitoring curriculum implementation:
 - Supporting staff to implement the curriculum
 - Developing a monitoring tool explicitly linked to the curriculum



Monitoring child development - purposes

Child development is less frequently monitored to inform policy-making, the public, and for accountability purposes, but rather to enhance child development (16/21), identify learning needs of children (16/21), and improving the level of service quality (15/21)





Monitoring child development - implementation

- Observations are the most commonly used (18/21) – also in Slovenia
- Direct assessments are used in 12/21 jurisdictions and are usually not mandatory or at national level, including in Slovenia
- 15 jurisdictions make use of narrative assessments, which describe the development of children through narratives or stories – not commonly used in Slovenia
- Frequency is rarely regulated by law - continuous monitoring is strongly encouraged by regulations
- Usually takes place at least once a year, or continuously, since monitoring children's development is most often used for formative purposes
- 2/3 jurisdictions share child records with primary schools - this is not obligatory, but is rather common practice



Monitoring child development – how?

- Direct assessments are done through testing (9/21) or screening (9/21). In Slovenia, testing of language and literacy skills can be done.
- Tests are formal assessments, often administered on paper or on a computer, intended to measure children's knowledge, skills and/or aptitudes
- Screening is designed to identify problems or delays during normal childhood development
- Screening usually involves a short test to assess whether a child is learning basic skills and can include some questions the professional asks a child or parent, or information gathered through play
- Direct assessments are usually conducted by ECEC staff, or external agencies (language specialists, psychologists, medical staff etc.)



Monitoring child development – how?

- Narrative assessments consist of storytelling practices (11/21) or portfolios (14/21)
- It is a more inclusive approach to assessing child development, as it involves not only the professionals but also the children's work, and can include inputs from parents
- Narrative assessments can be integrated into everyday activities, are time-costly for staff but impact children very little
- Can include results from observations



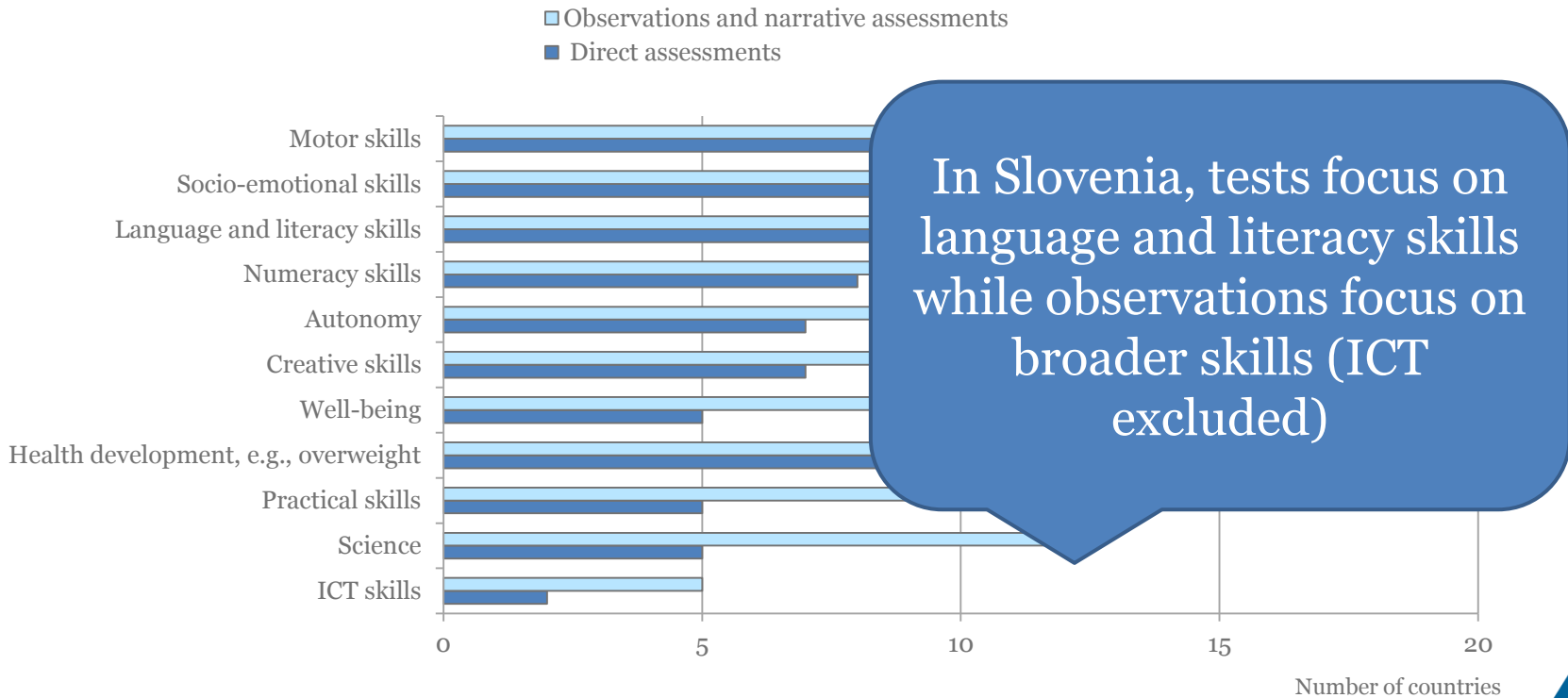
Monitoring child development – how?

- Observations make most commonly use of checklists (17/21) and rating scales (12/21). Slovenia makes most commonly use of checklists.
- Can be intended for a more narrowly defined, specific purpose (e.g. inspection, peer review) or remain open-ended (e.g. to document a child's progress for parents)
- Little pressure/influence on children
- Monitoring children's views when assessing child development has become a more widespread practice (11/21) – also in Slovenia



Monitoring child development – what?

Direct assessments are mostly applied to testing language and literacy, while observations and narrative assessments tend to focus on a broader range of skills





Monitoring child development - challenges

- Creating an accurate and complete picture of child development:
 - Using multiple instruments
 - Continuous assessment of child development
- Recognising children's individual development:
 - Tailoring monitoring to the individual child
 - Using developmentally appropriate tools



Questions?

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