

## **Home-based educarers – Knowledge brokers and social capital bridgers**

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### **Abstract**

In this paper, I will report and discuss key findings of a study conducted to explore the characteristics and qualities of home-based childcare. Home-based childcare, also known as family day care, is defined as non-parental, non-familial childcare provided by a childminder or nanny. It is an integral and almost indispensable service for parents in employment by offering flexible and affordable childcare services, underpinned by strong relationships and a real-life, enacted pedagogy. This study was conducted to explore the rarely heard views of registered childminders and trained nannies about their practices as home-based educarers. An online open-ended questionnaire was distributed among eligible participants, resulting in 99 responses. The questionnaire was followed up by an online focus group discussion with six nannies. Thematic analyses of data were employed to identify overarching themes. To a large extent, the findings corroborated with those of previous studies. However, on close inspection, the participants' responses revealed a unique characteristic and quality of their role, that of being knowledge brokers and social capital bridgers, demonstrating the complex, multi-faceted and empowering nature of their work as home-based educarers. I will discuss these findings in the light of knowledge brokerage and social capital theories to reconceptualize and theorize the wider remit and role of home-based educarers, beyond child-centric frameworks dominant in early childhood education and care. I will also explore the implications of the findings for the professionalization of home-based educarers and relevant policy.

**Keywords:** home-based childcare, family day care, educate, knowledge brokerage, social capital