



The Maryland Early Childhood Leadership Program (MECLP), at UMBC's Sherman Center for Early Learning in Urban Communities, is a workforce initiative designed to accelerate cross-sector leadership in early childhood. MECLP seeks to develop and support strong leaders who will catalyze positive change and significantly improve school readiness and related outcomes for early learners, particularly disadvantaged and vulnerable children. MECLP prepares newly developed leaders representing a variety of early childhood classrooms, programs, and associated fields that comprise Maryland's early childhood system to:

- Effect state-level change in systems, policies, and programs that affect young children (birth to eight) and their families.
- Develop a broad and diverse network of early childhood professionals recognized as transformative leaders in the field creating a diverse and equitable workforce pipeline. ■ Advocate for equitable high-quality early childhood care and education experiences for all children.
- Expand early childhood coursework in higher education to institutionalize leadership skills. ■ Position Maryland as a leader in developing strong ECE systems leaders.
- Create collective impact to improve outcomes for young children, families, and communities.

To catalyze early childhood education leadership in Maryland, MECLP partnered with The Institute for Early Education Leadership and Innovation (IEELI) at the University of Massachusetts, Boston to deliver a customized version of IEELI's research-based, three-credit Leading for Change in Early Childhood Education course, SHER 601. Building on this course, MECLP is creating a pathway to a six-credit graduate Endorsement in Early Childhood Leadership at UMBC. The pathway will include the following MECLP tiers:

Tier 1: Completion of the existing leadership course, SHER 601, which builds skills, knowledge, and dispositions in seven core leadership competencies: visioning, values, people management, organizational capacity, results and outcomes, creativity and innovation, and policy advocacy.

The 12-month, cohort based, three-credit post baccalaureate course provides a mix of six in-person day long learning sessions that include guest presentations, six asynchronous online learning sessions, individual and small group assignments, and a capstone project focused on an issue specific to early childhood in Maryland.

In 2022, MECLP will offer Tier 2, the newly developed three-credit course--SHER 602, with an emphasis on the science of leadership, measurement, data collection, evaluation and micro processing, effective business and management systems, implementation of capstone projects, and application of Leadership skills through research and field experiences. Students completing SHER 601 and SHER 602 will receive UMBC's Endorsement in Early Childhood Leadership.



This tiered approach will build early childhood education workforce capacity for leadership positions with different levels of complexity. As the Blueprint for Maryland's Future is being implemented, MECLP will develop early education leaders to serve as Directors/Coordinators of childcare programs and Judy Centers, in supervisory roles at large and small non-profit organizations and local school systems, as well as lead policymaking at governmental agencies. MECLP is positioning itself as the state's early childhood education leadership hub with the purpose of enhancing the ECE workforce as outlined in MSDE's Maryland's Path to School Readiness and Success.

After completion of SHER 601, MECLP fellows can join a Community of Practice with a robust mentoring program, participate in Leadership in Action Conversations with ECE leaders across the state, join state-wide and national webinars, and attend annual Early Childhood Leadership Institutes. MECLP leadership fellows benefit from the Community of Practice as they hone their leadership skills and become actively engaged in advocating for equitable high-quality early childhood care and education experiences for all children.

In the next five years, MECLP expects to:

- Graduate more than 100 fellows from racially and linguistically diverse backgrounds to collectively improve Maryland's early childhood system.
- Conduct a program and course evaluation to ensure that MECLP is engaged in a continuous improvement cycle.
- Champion MECLP fellows as early childhood leaders in Maryland through a vibrant Community of Practice within the state and nationally.
- Build its capacity to sustain leadership development activities as the state's early childhood education system expands.