



## Message from Louise Corwin

MECLP's progress and accomplishments in the first half of 2022 demonstrate the continued growth and viability of MECLP. This is illustrated by a demand for more cohorts of early childhood emerging leaders, a vibrant Community of Practice which includes coaching/mentoring support, webinars, and an online professional learning community for course completers.

MECLP's early childhood leadership hub is gaining momentum and participation. This is demonstrated through a refreshed website filled with exciting news of our *fellows'* leadership journeys, research and reports pertinent to early childhood, and descriptions and recordings of our webinars. In addition, Community Conversations highlight pertinent topics recommended by our *fellows*, provide a platform for our *fellows* to "lead" the discussion and respond to their colleagues' questions.

We formed a partnership with the USM's Southern Maryland Regional Center that will allow MECLP an opportunity to offer two cohorts of *fellows* – one on UMBC's campus and a second in the Southern Maryland area to minimize the travel time and mileage expenses for our *fellows*. A grant from the Trust for Learning gives MECLP the opportunity to provide field experiences to our *fellows*, introducing them to the Principles of Ideal Learning Environments and culminating in the publication of a Guide based on a case review illustrating the benefit of infusing the principles into more early childhood leadership programs in Maryland. Finally, two new Advisory Committee members will bring their perspectives and voices to MECLP's Advisory Committee, broadening and refreshing our programming and future plans.

The MECLP model is producing transformative "agents of change" - leaders invested in creating an early childhood workforce pipeline, driving financial investments and potential national replication. I hope that you are energized by the work of MECLP and you will continue to support MECLP and Maryland's early childhood efforts.

Louise Corwin

Co-Founder – Co-Chair of the MECLP Advisory Committee

## Leadership in Action: A Conversation

During the winter months, MECLP continued its focus on equity in early childhood. In December, Christina Lopez, a Cohort I *fellow* and MDAEYC President moderated a conversation with Susan Friedman, Senior Director, Publishing and Content Development, NAEYC, and Alissa Mwenelupembe, Senior Director, Early Learning Program Accreditation, NAEYC, based on their book *Each and Every Child*. The conversation included a discussion on developmentally appropriate practices for all children, ways to provide equitable education to young children, and the importance of reflecting on personal biases in order to provide high quality education to children from diverse backgrounds.

***"I learned a lot and especially enjoyed hearing other educators express views like mine about developmentally appropriate practices not being overlooked because of accountability, data, and testing." - MECLP Fellow***

The February Conversation featured Dr. Shana E. Rochester, Research Associate and Assistant Director at the Sherman Center for Early Learning in Urban Communities and Ms. Anika Aquino, Research Assistant. They described their project - The Diverse Books Project 2.0: Supporting Early Care and Education Teachers' Use of Multicultural Books - and shared ways to successfully integrate multicultural books in early childhood settings to reinforce (or combat) inequity. They provided explicit strategies to integrate diverse books as tools to teach children about diversity from a new lens and support children's capacity to thrive in a multicultural society.

## Cohort IV Applications are now available!

**Applications for Cohort IV can be found on our website, [meclp.umbc.edu/cohort-iv-applications](https://meclp.umbc.edu/cohort-iv-applications). If you have any questions, please email [meclp@umbc.edu](mailto:meclp@umbc.edu).**

**Applications close June 24th.**

## Who are the MECLP Fellows?



*"I really wanted to be part of something bigger than myself. I wanted to contribute to the work of improving experiences for young children. I wanted to know that I was a part of the solution and not the problem. The experiences I have gained through MECLP and MDAEYC have allowed me to work toward my purpose. I will continue to give voice and a platform for the people and children that do not have a voice."*

*- Christina Lopez, Inaugural MECLP Fellow*

Christina Lopez joined MECLP because of her desire to find ways to be more effective and ensure positive outcomes for her students. Participating in MECLP validated and encouraged Christina to take on more responsibilities and create positive change. The MECLP community provided support and a place for Christina to explore new ideas and build relationships with other *fellows* and stakeholders. This opportunity created new friendships and collaborations.

In December, Christina helped organize the Child Care for Every Family Network Rally in Washington D.C. She was invited to speak at a Select Committee Press Event with Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Early Childhood Investments in the Build Back Better Act to Address Economic Disparity. Representing NAEYC and speaking as a parent, Christina's comments helped to raise awareness of the need for equitable access to services for children with special needs. "My story highlighted that every child may not need the same thing, but every child needs and deserves support and access. As a mother and early childhood educator, my story matters...I spoke from real-life experience and from my heart." When asked about her future plans, Christina shared, "I want to continue learning, being okay with feeling uncomfortable, and continue pushing forward and helping others understand that leadership is an everyday choice and can be difficult, but it is one we must be brave enough to make if we want real change."

**Kudos to Christina!**

## MECLP is Expanding

In an effort to address the growing need to develop high quality early childhood leaders throughout Maryland, MECLP is taking action to expand. To reach a diverse leader pool in Maryland, two initiatives have been created to expand MECLP. The first is MECLP's inaugural Training of Trainers (ToT) class, launched in January, 2022. Participants submitted applications and were selected to participate in a rigorous, year-long program that prepares them to co-teach SHER 601 and SHER 602 to future cohorts. The second expansion effort is a collaboration between MECLP and the University of Maryland. Expansion to the USM Southern Maryland Regional Center will allow us to offer two cohorts simultaneously – one cohort at the main UMBC campus and a second cohort in California, MD. We are very excited to expand the reach of MECLP in Maryland.

## MECLP Welcomes Two New Advisory Committee Members

MECLP strives to support the development of leaders in the early childhood field so that they will become empowered to raise their voices and initiate change in the field. To ensure MECLP maintains strong connections with early childhood stakeholders across Maryland and to continue to support its *fellows* on their leadership journey, two outstanding course completers were invited to join MECLP's Advisory Committee. The new members are Alicia Cross, Assistant Director, National Institute of Science and Technology Child Care Center in Gaithersburg, MD, a *fellow* in Cohort II and Rudi O'Keefe-Zelman, Regional Director, The Literacy Lab in Baltimore, MD, a *fellow* in Cohort I.



**Alicia Cross**

*"I joined the Advisory Committee to offer a voice that will shift the mindset of our leaders and encourage new leaders to rise."*



**Rudi O'Keefe-Zelman**

*"I joined the Advisory Committee because the work MECLP is doing to support early childhood leadership in Maryland is critical. I am excited to be a part of MECLP's continued impact and am looking forward to learning from the other committee members."*