

The MECLP Pulse



BUILDING THE FUTURE OF
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Maryland Early Childhood Leadership Program

SPRING, 2025 | Issue 1



A YEAR OF IMPACT AND GROWTH

Advancing Leadership, Transforming Early Childhood

As we reflect on the past year, we are proud of the strides MECLP has made in developing strong, equity-driven leaders in early childhood education. From dynamic coursework to engaging webinars, our fellows and alumni continue to lead transformational efforts across Maryland and beyond.

A SPOTLIGHT ON:

1. Spring 2025 Webinar Series
2. Cohort V Capstone Presentations; WELCOME Cohort VI!
3. Highlighting Our Courses SHER 601/602
4. Leadership Integration Circles: Building Supportive Leadership Communities
5. In the Community: Elevating Women's Voices

MECLP SPRING 2025 WEBINAR SERIES

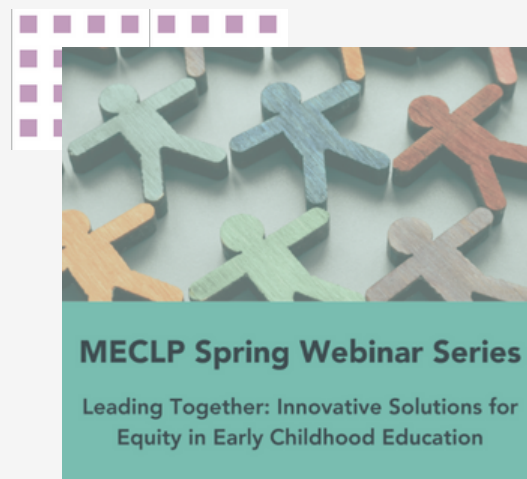


This spring, MECLP hosted a powerful three-part webinar series highlighting innovative leadership projects from Cohort V fellows. Each presentation reflected unique approaches to change in early childhood education:

March 11 – Monica Wiedel-Lubinski: Explored the growing disconnect between children and nature, emphasizing the importance of outdoor education and nature-based experiences.

March 18 – Kristen Paul: Addressed the ongoing issue of exclusionary discipline in early education, calling for policy shifts and restorative practices to foster more inclusive learning environments.

March 25 – Trina Tilghman-Dix: Presented a comprehensive approach to implementing trauma-informed care at the county level, advocating for collaboration across agencies to support young learners holistically. Thank you to all presenters for sharing their passion, research, and leadership with our community!



CAPSTONE CELEBRATION FOR COHORT V AND WELCOME TO COHORT VI!

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Congratulations to Cohort V . . . for successfully completing their capstone projects! Their work reflects deep commitment and creativity in advancing positive change across Maryland's early childhood landscape. We are grateful for the bold steps each of you has taken in service of young children and their families.

. . . and a huge welcome to Cohort VI, a vibrant and diverse group of emerging leaders dedicated to transforming early childhood education. We look forward to supporting your journey through MECLP and witnessing your impact in the field.



HIGHLIGHTING OUR COURSES: SHER 601/602



MECLP's leadership development program includes a 12-month hybrid graduate-level course: SHER 601, which is designed to equip participants with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to lead effective change in early childhood settings. Cohort members select a focal area, develop a theory of change, and connect academic case studies to their lived professional experiences. SHER 602 is a one-semester course that prepares students to be effective advocates, leaders, and change agents in early childhood education. It allows participants to develop strategies for influencing policy, promote equity, and implement research-informed advocacy plans that are rooted in their professional contexts and prior work.

Together, these courses are building a foundation for leadership rooted in equity, improvement, and innovation!

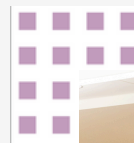


LEADERSHIP INTEGRATION CIRCLES: BUILDING SUPPORTIVE LEADERSHIP COMMUNITIES

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MECLP launched Leadership Integration Circles to provide fellows and alumni with consistent peer support, shared learning, and reflective leadership dialogue. These small, peer-led groups meet regularly to discuss challenges, celebrate wins, and grow together as change agents in early childhood education.

Leadership Integration Circles foster strong bonds across cohorts, deepen participants' commitment to equity-centered leadership, and help sustain momentum beyond the formal coursework.



IN THE COMMUNITY: ELEVATING WOMEN'S VOICES



On April 10th, the Washington Area Women's Foundation hosted the State of Women & Girls Breakfast—a powerful gathering focused on the well-being and advancement of women and girls in our region. **Roshon Casey-Lee**, a cohort Alum, attended on behalf of MECLP where she shared that a dynamic panel of experts, including leaders from the National Women's Law Center, Voices for Virginia's Children, the DC Fiscal Policy Institute, and the Foundation itself, imparted timely insights on the challenges we face and the opportunities ahead. A standout message: *"When you feel hopeless, you start to care less."* The speakers emphasized that now more than ever, staying engaged and grounded in our values is essential.

The conversation also highlighted a shift toward asset-based storytelling, centering strength and resilience rather than deficits. As one panelist shared, *"We have to use our voices to counteract the noise."* Roshon mentioned the event was a powerful reminder of the importance of narrative, voice, and collective action in driving both policy and cultural change.



STAY CONNECTED . . .

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We thank MECLP fellows, alumni, partners, and stakeholders for continued support and collaboration. MECLP's impact grows because of you. Let's continue working together to build a stronger, more equitable early childhood system.

Follow us at: meclp.umbc.edu

Email us at: lcwin@umbc.edu



BECOME A SPONSOR . . .

We invite you to partner with us and support MECLP's mission to empower current and future leaders in early childhood education. Together, we can create lasting change that benefits children, families, and communities across Maryland.

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