

# MARYLAND EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Powering the Leaders Who Power Early Learning



## WHO WE ARE

Maryland Early Childhood Leadership Program (MECLP) is a statewide leadership initiative housed at University of Maryland, Baltimore County's (UMBC) Shriver Center in the Division of Professional Studies and launched in partnership with the Sherman Center for Early Learning in Urban Communities. Structured as a self-sustaining, mission-aligned initiative, it accelerates the diverse, equity-centered leaders Maryland's early childhood system needs to thrive – through today's uncertainty and for tomorrow's future.

## MEETING THE MOMENT: Addressing Maryland's ECE Leadership Gap

MECLP was launched in 2019 to address a growing leadership gap in Maryland's early childhood system – just as the state was laying the foundation for the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. Passed in 2021, the Blueprint sets bold goals for expanding Pre-K and strengthening the early childhood workforce – goals that require strong, diverse leadership to succeed. At the same time, **the early childhood education (ECE) field faces a wave of turnover**: more than 1 in 4 current ECE leaders plan to leave the field in the next five years.

**The need for equity-driven, cross-sector leadership is urgent.** MECLP addresses that need. As the first satellite site of Early Education Leaders at UMass Boston, MECLP delivers a research-based, graduate-level model that blends coursework, coaching, applied projects, and a statewide learning community – bringing together leaders across the early childhood ecosystem to lay the groundwork for systems-level change and local-level innovations.

## IMPACT

### MECLP SUPPORTS LEADERSHIP THAT REFLECTS MARYLAND'S CHILDREN AND FAMILIES



**6**  
Cohorts



**72**  
Fellows



**58%**

Identify as leaders of color



**22%**

Are multilingual



**80%**

Are under the age of 50

**Connecting systems and settings:** Alums bring experience from and build trust across child care, family care, Head Start, Pre-K, for-profit and nonprofit organizations, and public systems.

**Shaping practice-based impact:** Capstone projects, Webinars, Leadership Forums, and coaching have shaped solutions to address real-world system challenges such as staff retention and inclusive curriculum.

**Sustaining influence in the field:** Fellows become part of a statewide and national network of mentors, connectors, and advocates leading collective change across Maryland's early childhood system. From presenting at major conferences to advising on policy reforms, MECLP alumni provide leadership that strengthens the early childhood system over time.

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**LET'S INVEST IN TOMORROW'S FUTURE - TODAY.**

MECLP builds on the strengths already within Maryland's early childhood workforce, supporting mid-career professionals to lead from where they are. It's a place-based, equity-centered approach that invests in people closest to the work - and equips them to drive lasting systems change through collective leadership, not one-time interventions. By developing leaders from within the field, across Maryland communities, MECLP is strengthening the early childhood system today - and growing it for tomorrow.

**LET'S INVEST IN THAT TOGETHER.**

## Stay Connected

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