



MARYLAND EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Sherman Center for Early Learning in Urban Communities

The Maryland Early Childhood Leadership Program (MECLP), a program of the Sherman Center for Early Learning in Urban Communities at UMBC, 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 and their families. MECLP will prepare 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.
- Advocate for equitable high-quality early childhood care and education experiences for all children.
- Develop a broad and diverse network of early childhood professionals recognized as transformative leaders in the field creating a workforce pipeline.
- Improve outcomes for young children, families and communities.

As its first major activity, MECLP has 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 *Leading for Change in Early Childhood Education* course. The modified curriculum is tailored to the specific needs of Maryland's early childhood community and encompasses seven core leadership competencies that will build skills, knowledge and dispositions in visioning, values, people management, organizational capacity, results and outcomes, creativity and innovation, and public policy knowledge. The 12-month, cohort based, 3-credit post baccalaureate course provides a mix of six in-person daylong 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.

The course uses a highly interactive approach that centers on the leadership development of each fellow in the context of the programs/settings in which they work providing them with a deeper understanding of themselves as agents of change in their fields. Cohort fellows will examine the theory and practice of change to gain an understanding of what contributes to organizational progress and sustained improvements and will analyze the sources that drive change as developing leaders. They will also examine impediments to change and survey a range of approaches for making change more effective.

In the next five years, MECLP expects to:

- Graduate 100 fellows representative of Maryland's diverse early childhood system.
- Implement a robust coaching model to mentor fellows after course completion.
- Conduct a program and course evaluation to ensure that MECLP and the *Leading for Change* course are meeting their stated goals.
- Establish an online professional learning community that will be enriched annually with new course completers.
- Champion MECLP fellows as early childhood leaders in Maryland through annual Leadership Institutes.
- Build Maryland's capacity to sustain MECLP's leadership development activities.

Maryland Early Childhood Leadership Program

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