

# The impact of race, culture, and language on the leadership journeys of ECEC leaders of color <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

Access online <sup>[2]</sup>

Access full article [PDF] <sup>[3]</sup>

## Background

Given the current context of a pandemic, social and economic upheaval, and the pressing challenge of structural racism, research to advance the profession of early childhood education and care (ECEC) leadership is of critical importance. The current crises have exacerbated long-standing challenges, such as a lack of coordinated policy, disparate regulations, and fragmented funding (Bassok, Magnuson, & Weiland, 2016). With substantial variation in the quality and availability of ECEC, under-resourced communities remain without the structural and economic support to stabilize services and thrive (Hasikawa, Sells, DeJonge, Alkon, Martin, & Shope, 2020; Malik, Hamm, Schochet, Novoa, Workman, & Jessen-Howard, 2018).

As gatekeepers to quality, ECEC program leaders have a direct impact on organizational climate, teaching practices, and family engagement in their programs (Bloom & Abel, 2015; Douglass, 2019). There has been little research, however, on the diversity of ECEC program leaders. School leaders are predominantly white, with only 20% of public school principals representing individuals of color (USDOE, 2016). In the child care sector, about 40% of the early childhood workforce and 52% of those working with infants and toddlers are women of color, with low wages and scarce opportunities functioning as barriers to advancement (McLean, Austin, Whitebook, & Olson, 2021; NAEYC, 2019). These findings call for an imperative to include the voices of leaders of color in exploring pathways to racial equity and conversations related to the direction of the ECEC profession (Robinson, 2020). There is a critical need to examine and dismantle structural racism and to create an equitable system of inclusion for ECEC program leadership.

The Leading with Equity: Building Leaders research project addresses a gap in the existing research by explicitly addressing social justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion in the context of ECEC program leadership structures, systems, and practices. It explores how early childhood leaders of color perceive their input into the formation of professional competencies, professional development policy, and the future direction of the ECEC leadership profession.

This brief is concerned with just one of the research questions guiding the Leading with Equity research project: How has race, culture, or language influenced the leadership journeys of ECEC program leaders of color?

**Region:** United States <sup>[4]</sup>

**Tags:** diversity <sup>[5]</sup>

leadership <sup>[6]</sup>

workforce <sup>[7]</sup>

**Source URL (modified on 11 Sep 2024):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/22/08/impact-race-culture-and-language-leadership-journeys-ecec>

## Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/22/08/impact-race-culture-and-language-leadership-journeys-ecec> [2]

<https://mccormickcenter.nl.edu/library/research-brief-2206/> [3] [https://mccormickcenter.nl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/MCECL-](https://mccormickcenter.nl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/MCECL-ResearchBrief_220621.pdf)

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