**Presenter: Michelle Loft**

Michelle Loft tells stories. She’s been doing it for years. Her first big story was a mystery about a red dress and some blue paint. Her mother said, “Your stories will take you somewhere one day.”

After school, Michelle landed in the world of advertising, PR and marketing. In a career spanning nearly two decades, she created stories in a huge variety of forms: scripts for corporate videos, speeches, museum display copy, websites, award winning annual reports, flyers and glossy brochures.

Michelle was a founding partner of Minds At Work. Brainstorming sessions, creative discussions and keynote addresses were standard fare during the six years she roamed the country unlocking people’s innate creativity, empowering them to think for themselves! She was a regular voice on ABC 774 Melbourne with the breakfast program and nationally through the ABC network.

In 2007 Michelle stepped back from the corporate world to immerse herself in the care of her two young children. As the kids made their way through kindergarten and school, Michelle volunteered to co-ordinate group art and craft making experiences including murals and all day festivals. Her passion for recycling and reusing objects into artworks earned her the title of “The Bottletop Lady”.

In 2012, all these adventures, skills and experiences culminated in Michelle entering the early childhood sector as a classroom educator and professional trainer in the art of play.

**Lisa Perkins**

Originally from the river town of Balclutha on New Zealand’s South Island, Lisa is a gal with zero tolerance for boredom, bad coffee and zumba. After considering a career in veterinary science – she decided rodents creeped her out – Lisa was drawn to early childhood education where she could indulge her fondness for mischievous small children and creative play.

With oodles of qualifications in early childhood education, and buckets of experience, including a stint with the renowned Mozart’s Performing Arts Kindergarten in Christchurch, NZ, Lisa currently leads the team at First Learnings Child Care Centre, St Kilda East, Victoria. She is a valued manager, recognised for her strong work ethic, quick thinking skills and calm and even tempered personality. Lisa oversees a creative play-based program where mess and laughter are the benchmarks for “a good day”.

Lisa is passionate about improving the quality of everyday standards in early childhood and wants to help educators re-connect with their passion for working with children.

**Kim Thurlow**

Kim paints big pictures - not with oil paint, but with ideas and possibilities and clarity and meaning. She can look at a jumbled big mess of stuff and reshape the useful pieces, know which ones to discard and create a result that is effective, efficient and inspiring. She has done it with companies, schools and non-profit organisations and now she wants to take on the Australian Early Childhood sector.  
  
Always looking for new challenges, Kim has hiked Kokoda, built a playground in remote Laos with her family and has finessed the art of baking a croquembouche…almost!  
  
Kim is master of juggling...not balls or flaming torches, but many tasks, schedules and priorities at once. Kim currently combines her role as Director of Organisation Effectiveness at Sinapse Consulting with the task of CEO of First Learnings Child Care. She is also “Mum” to two school-age sons, and sits on numerous committees and voluntary bodies.  
  
Kim is ready to share over 16 years’ experience in organistational design and management consulting with early childhood professionals across Australia to make the our industry the envy of the world.

**Teena Rabjohns**

Teena fell in love with numbers and reading in Grade 1 at school and never looked back. Having indulged in an eclectic range of courses and classes, Teena can crunch the hell out of a budget, explain the art of negotiating with a child with autism or teach you how to dance the tango! Today she is really good at reading between the lines and in our opinion, nobody knows speaks MYOB like our Teena can!

Teena landed in the world of early childhood 17 years ago and has thrived on being part of a team committed to proving quality care for children and their families. As Finance Manager at First Learnings Management Group, Teena maintains balance and order across all aspects of the business. She has a developed a treasure-trove of skill, techniques, solutions and tricks that she is ready share with Australia’s early childhood industry.