Early Tree

EARLY TREE SUPPORT · GUIDE

Kitchen and allergens

Menus, allergies and dietary needs

EARLY TREE VERSION
2026.11

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FOR
Cooks and managers

ONLINE
help.earlytree.co.uk

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Screenshots show a fictional nursery and people.

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Kitchen and allergens: menus, allergies and dietary needs. These steps match Early Tree 2026.11; for another version, see help.earlytree.co.uk.

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Reading the screenshots. The orange numbers 1 on a picture match the numbers in the step text, and an orange box marks the part of the screen a step is about. Every guide is also online, with search, at help.earlytree.co.uk.

KITCHEN AND ALLERGENS

Kitchen: menus, allergies and dietary needs

WHO IT'S FOR	WHERE TO FIND IT	TIME	YOU NEED
Cook, Manager	**Kitchen** › **Weekly Menu** › **Menu Planner**	20 minutes a week	Kitchen

Purpose

Make sure every child gets food that is safe for them: record each child's allergies and dietary needs, plan menus with an alternative for every need, and check each menu before you publish it.

What the law asks of you

The EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers (effective 1 September 2026) requires you to:

- provide healthy, balanced and nutritious meals, snacks and drinks, with fresh drinking water always available (paragraph 3.63);
- find out about any special dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and intolerances before a child is admitted, share it with everyone who prepares and handles food, and be clear at each meal and snack who checks that the food meets each child's needs (paragraph 3.65);
- develop allergy action plans with parents, keep them up to date and share them with all staff (paragraph 3.66).

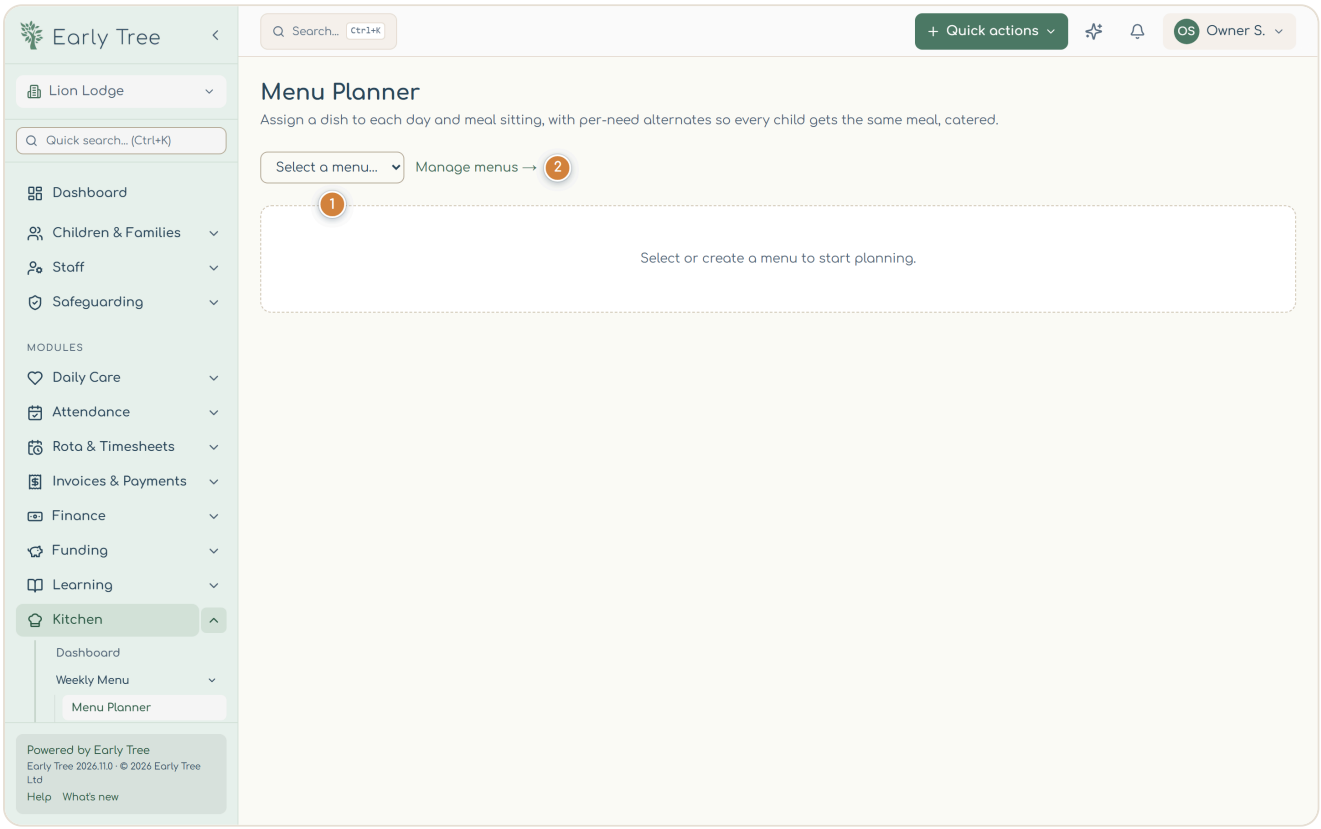
Record a child's allergies and dietary needs

1. Open the child's record and go to **Medical**. Select **Edit**.
2. Switch on **Has allergies**, then fill in **Allergic to** and **Reaction and what to do**.
3. Switch on **Has dietary requirements** and describe them, for example vegetarian, halal or a texture need.
4. Save. The record shows the **Flagged allergens (menus)** the menu checks use, from the 14 allergens food businesses must declare.

Parents give this information during onboarding, before the child starts. Check it with them and update it whenever it changes. Upload the child's allergy action plan to their **Documents**.

Plan a menu

1. Select **Kitchen › Weekly Menu › Menu Planner**, then choose a menu (1), or create one under **Manage menus** (2).
2. Select a day and sitting, choose the **Main dish** (or describe it), and add **Alternatives** for each need. Select **Save**.
3. Check the side panel. **Nutrition compliance** checks the menu against the guidance. **Child safety checks** shows any child with a recorded allergy or preference who has no safe alternative; fix every conflict until it says every child can be catered for.
4. Select **Publish menu**. It's published straight away.



The menu planner.

Fill daily reports from the menu

In **Daily Care › Daily reports**, select **Fill from menu** next to **Add Meal** to add the meals from this week's published menu. Then record how much each child ate.

ALWAYS CHECK AT THE TABLE

The menu checks only know what's recorded. At every meal and snack, the person responsible must check each child's food against their needs, and there should always be a member of staff with a paediatric first aid certificate in the room (EYFS paragraph 3.64).

Common problems

A child isn't flagged in the safety checks.

Their allergies or dietary needs aren't recorded on their Medical section. Update their record.

Fill from menu adds nothing.

There's no published menu for this week. Publish it in the Menu Planner.

Related guides

- Daily reports
- The child record