Early Tree

EARLY TREE SUPPORT · GUIDE

Rota

Planning the week, ratios and staffing rules

EARLY TREE VERSION
2026.11

PUBLISHED
15 November 2026

FOR
Managers and deputy managers

ONLINE
help.earlytree.co.uk

© 2026 Early Tree Ltd

Screenshots show a fictional nursery and people.

Contents

Rota: planning the week, ratios and staffing rules. These steps match Early Tree 2026.11; for another version, see help.earlytree.co.uk.

Rota 3

- Guides in this area 3
- What the law asks of you 3

Rota: planning the week's rota 4

- Purpose 4
- Before you start 4
- Generate the week 4
- Check ratios and adjust shifts 5
- Publish 7
- Timesheets 7
- Common problems 7
- Related guides 7

Rota: ratios and staffing rules 8

- Purpose 8
- Before you start 8
- Set the rules 8
- Common problems 9
- Related guides 9

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.

ROTA

Rota

WHO IT'S FOR

Manager | Deputy manager

WHERE TO FIND IT

Rota & Timesheets

Rota & Timesheets plans each week's shifts against the children booked in, checks ratios and qualifications every 15 minutes through the day, and records the hours staff actually work for payroll. It needs the Rota & Timesheets module.

Guides in this area

Guide	When
Planning the week's rota	Each week: generate, check, adjust and publish the rota
Ratios and staffing rules	Setting up your nursery's ratios and policy rules

What the law asks of you

The EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers (effective 1 September 2026) sets the minimum staff:child ratios. They apply to the staff available to work directly with children across the whole provision, not just each room (paragraph 3.47):

Children	At least	Paragraph
Under 2	1 member of staff for every 3 children	3.48
Aged 2	1 for every 5	3.49
3 and over, while a person with QTS, EYPS or EYTS works directly with them	1 for every 13	3.50
3 and over, otherwise	1 for every 8	3.51

Each age band also has qualification rules (for example, at least one member of staff with an approved level 3 qualification, and at least half of the others with level 2). At least one person with a current paediatric first aid certificate must be on the premises and available at all times when children are present (paragraph 3.37). A setting can be stricter than these minimums, never looser.

ROTA

Rota: planning the week's rota

WHO IT'S FOR	WHERE TO FIND IT	TIME	YOU NEED
Manager Deputy manager	**Rota & Timesheets** › **Week Planner**	About 15 minutes a week	Permission to change the rota

Purpose

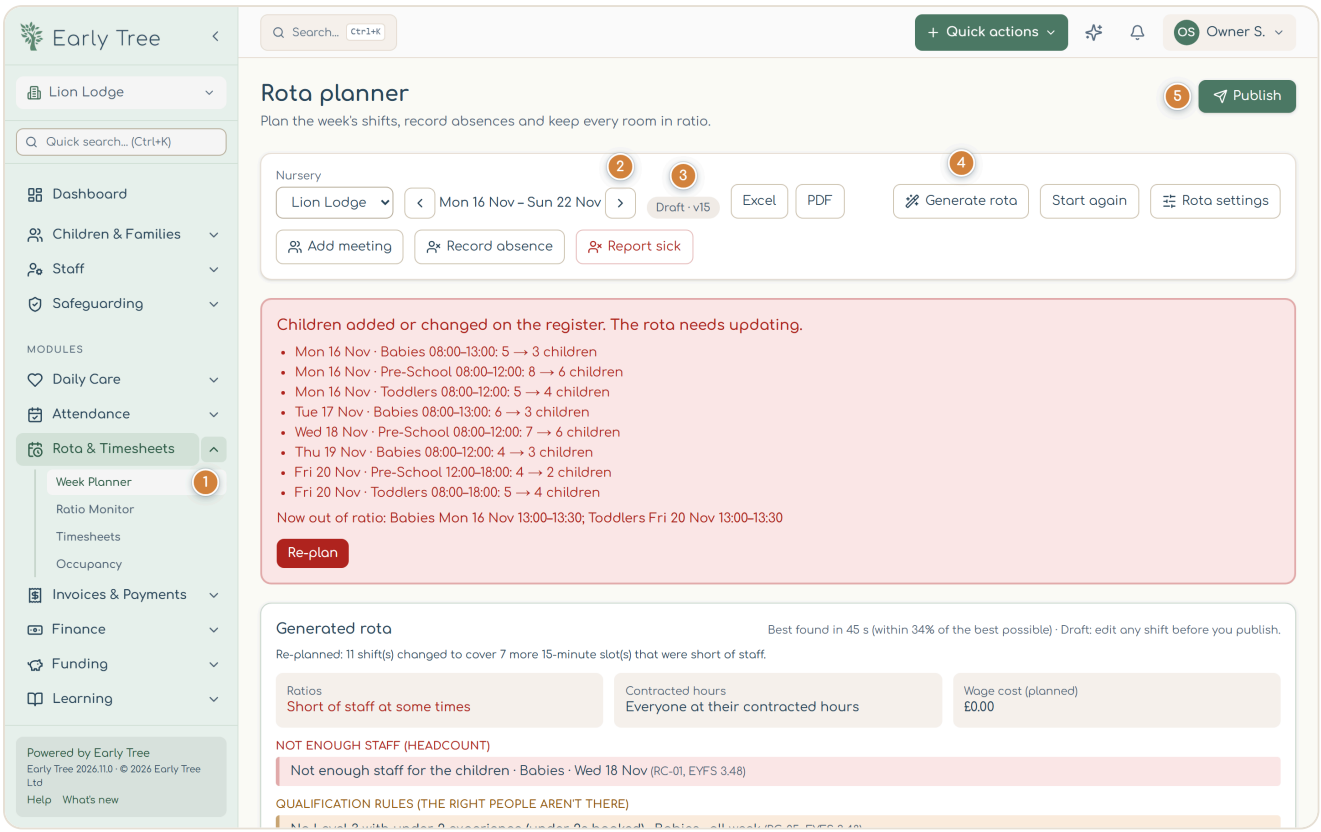
Plan each week so every room stays in ratio, with the right qualifications in the right place, at a sensible cost, and let staff see their shifts.

Before you start

- Children's booking patterns are up to date: the rota plans against the children booked in.
- Staff records have their working pattern, contracted hours, qualifications and paediatric first aid.
- Your ratios and staffing rules are set.

Generate the week

1. In the menu, select **Rota & Timesheets**, then **Week Planner** 1.
2. Use the arrows 2 to choose the week. The badge 3 shows where the week is: **Not started**, **Draft**, **Published** or **Locked**.
3. Select **Generate rota** 4. Early Tree plans the shifts and shows a summary: whether every room is in ratio, contracted hours, the planned wage cost, and anything it couldn't solve (not enough staff, or the right qualifications not there).



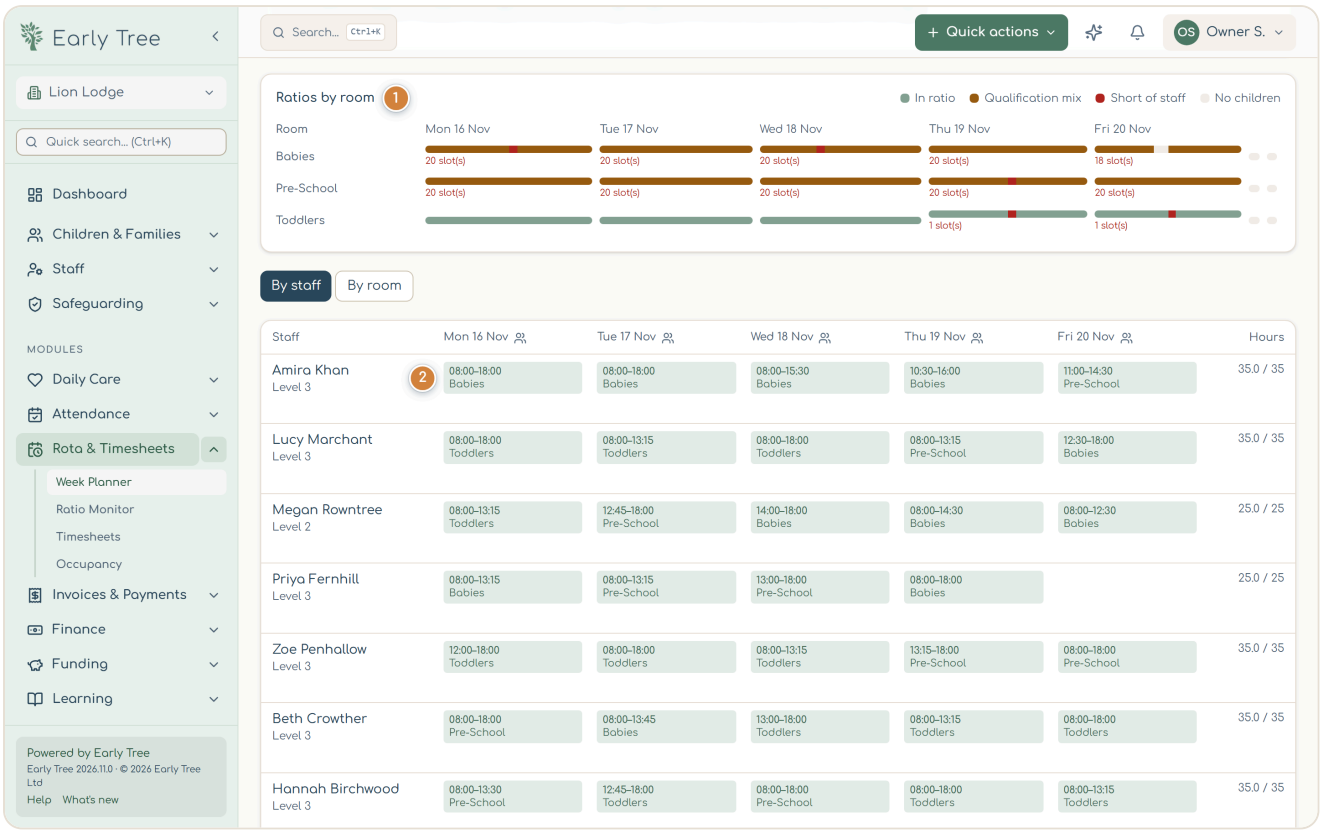
The rota planner. Publish (5) shares the week with staff.

Check ratios and adjust shifts

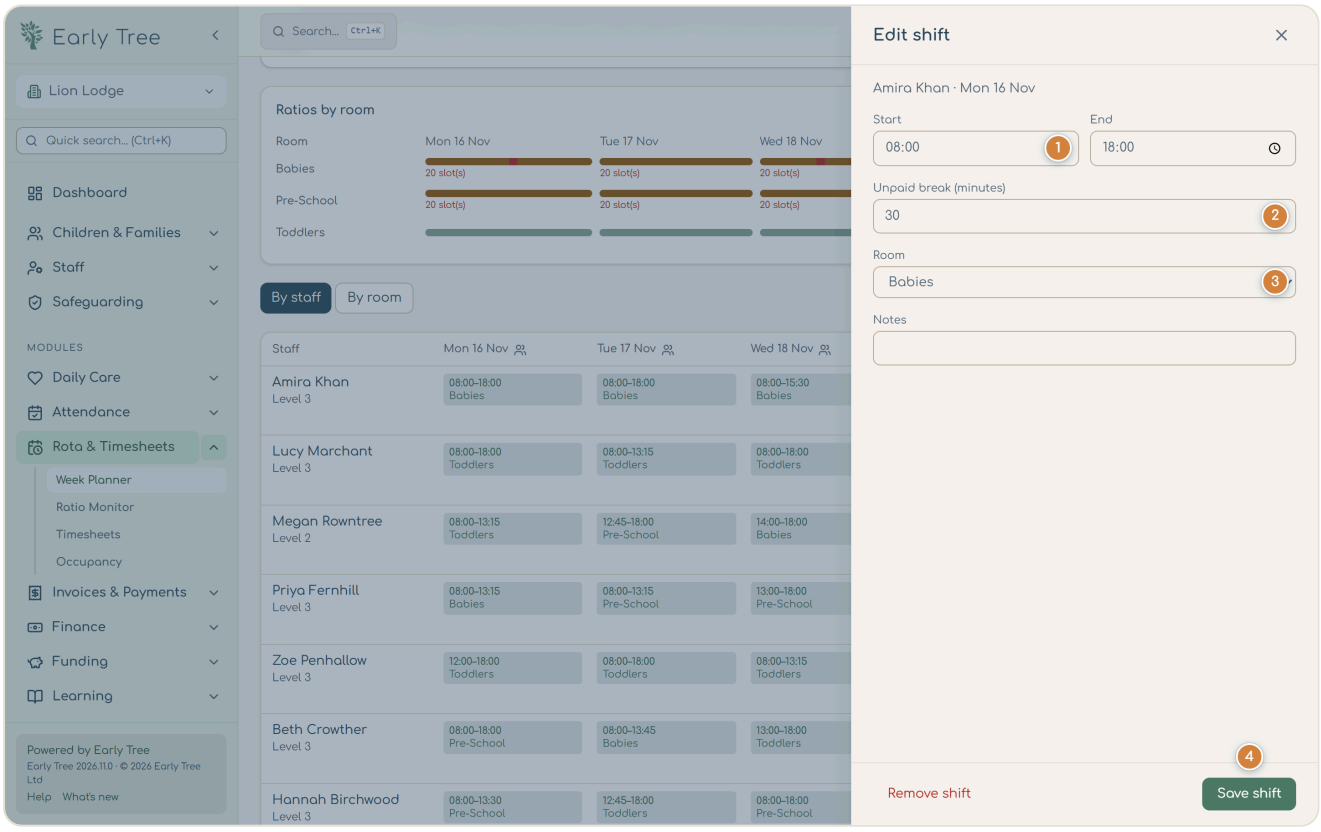
1. **Ratios by room** 1 shows each room's day as a strip: **In ratio**, **Qualification mix**, **Short of staff** or **No children**. A count under a day shows how many 15-minute slots need attention.

2. The staff grid shows each person's shifts 2 and their planned hours against contracted hours. **By room** shows the same week room by room.

3. To change a shift, select it. Change the **Start** and **End** 1, the **Unpaid break (minutes)** 2 and the **Room** 3, then **Save shift** 4. To add one, hover over an empty day and select the add button. You can also drag a shift to another day.



- Ratios by room, and each member of staff's shifts.



- Editing a shift.

Publish

1. When the week is right, select **Publish** 5 and confirm. Staff on the rota can see their shifts and are notified.
2. If something changes after publishing (a child added, someone off sick), use **Re-plan from now**. Early Tree proposes changes; select **Accept and notify** to apply them, or **Cancel**.
3. When the week is over and timesheets are approved, **Lock** it so it can't be changed.

What you should see

> The badge shows **Published** with its version. Staff see their shifts, and the Ratio Monitor shows the day's ratios against the published rota.

Timesheets

Rota & Timesheets › Timesheets compares staff clock-ins with the rota. Fix anything flagged (each correction needs a reason, kept in the audit log), then select **Approve week** once the week has finished. **Payroll (.xlsx)** downloads the approved hours.

Common problems

"Still out of ratio where staff did not allow".
There aren't enough staff, or the right qualifications, at those times. Add a shift, move someone, or check absences and staff availability.

"Children added or changed on the register. The rota needs updating."
Bookings changed after the rota was made. Select **Re-plan** to update it.

"Someone else changed this week while you were editing".
Select **Reload** and make your change again.

There's no Generate rota button.
The week is already published or locked. Use **Re-plan from now** for a published week.

Related guides

- Ratios and staffing rules

ROTA

Rota: ratios and staffing rules

WHO IT'S FOR	WHERE TO FIND IT	TIME	YOU NEED
Owner, Manager	**Settings** › **Ratios and staffing rules**	About 5 minutes	Permission to change the rota; the group default needs an owner

Purpose

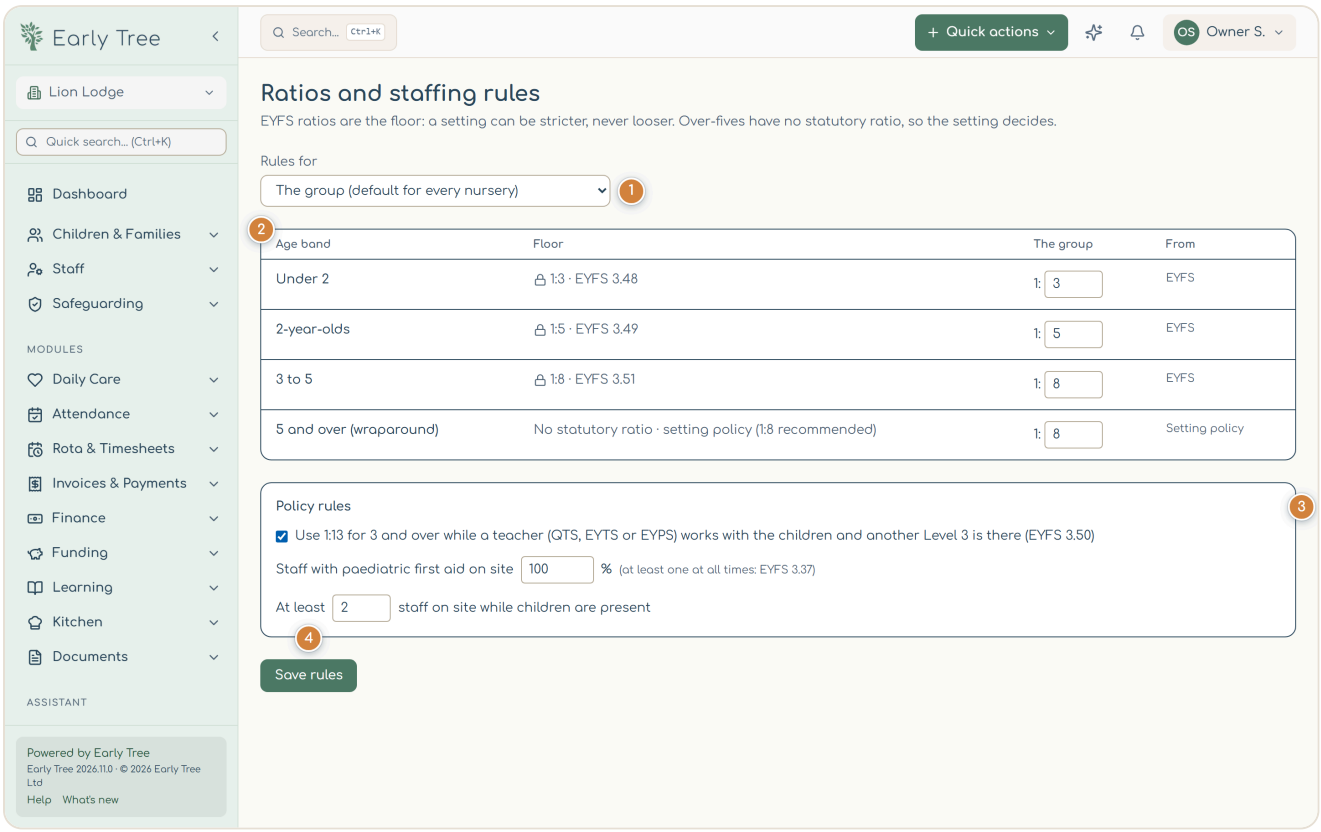
Tell Early Tree the ratios your nursery works to. The EYFS ratios are the floor: a setting can be stricter, never looser. Over-fives have no statutory ratio, so the setting decides.

Before you start

- Know whether your rules apply to the whole group or to one nursery.

Set the rules

1. Open **Settings** and select **Ratios and staffing rules**.
2. Under **Rules for** 1, choose **The group** (the default for every nursery) or one nursery.
3. For each age band 2, enter how many children per member of staff. The floor is shown with its EYFS paragraph; Early Tree won't accept a looser ratio.
4. Under **Policy rules** 3, choose whether to use 1:13 for children aged 3 and over while a teacher (QTS, EYTS or EYPS) works with them and another level 3 is there (EYFS paragraph 3.50), the share of staff with paediatric first aid on site (at least one at all times: paragraph 3.37), and the fewest staff on site while children are present.
5. Select **Save rules** 4.



Ratios and staffing rules.

What you should see

> **Saved. The rota and the ratio checks use these now.**

Common problems

"...is looser than the EYFS...".

The number you entered allows more children per member of staff than the law does. Enter the EYFS number or a stricter one.

"Only an owner can set the group default...".

Choose your own nursery under **Rules for**, or ask an owner.

Related guides

- Planning the week's rota