About Ele's Place

Ele's Place is a Michigan nonprofit where children and teens ages 3–18 can meet others their age after the death of someone important to them. Families take part at no cost. Parents and caregivers can also meet with peers while their children attend a group.

Our beginnings

In 1991, Betsy and Woody Stover joined community volunteers and mental health professionals in Lansing to create a place for grieving children. Their daughter Helen Louise Snow Stover, known as Ele, died at 11 months old. Her three older siblings were among the first children to attend.

Today, Ele's Place serves families through three branches: Ann Arbor, Capital Region (Lansing), and West Michigan (Grand Rapids). Since 1991, more than 33,000 people have received support across Michigan.

2025 statewide impact

1,334 Participants in on-site family support	**453** Students in school-based groups
51 School-based grief support groups	**24** Michigan counties served

Source: Ele's Place 2025 statewide program totals

How support works

At Ele's Place. Children and teens meet in age-based groups with trained volunteers and program staff. A child might draw a memory, talk about the person who died, or listen to someone who understands.

At school. Through Ele's Groups, staff partner with school counselors to offer eight-week peer groups during the school day. Schools and community organizations can also request a presentation about supporting grieving children.

Our vision **To ensure no child or teen in Michigan grieves alone.**

Reporting on childhood grief

Name the death directly

Use “died” or “died by suicide.” When you know the relationship, say “after her father died” or use the person’s name. “The person who died” leaves room for a relationship the speaker has yet to describe.

Describe grief without a deadline

Children and teens can learn to live with grief. Describe what they share about their own experience. A family may honor, acknowledge, or recognize the anniversary of a death.

Describe what happens at Ele’s Place

Children and teens take part in peer support groups. “Group” or “support group” describes the experience. “Class” suggests a lesson or course.

Invite the person to tell the story

Ask “What would you like people to know about your dad?” or “Would you tell me about your drawing?” Leave time for an answer. Listen for the feeling the person describes and let them decide how much to share.

Keep people’s own words

This guidance applies to Ele’s Place’s descriptions. A child or caregiver may choose different words. Respect those choices and preserve the wording of direct quotations.

Adapted from Ele’s Place Vocabulary, the organization’s facilitator guidance.

Official logos

Select a PNG below. Use the original colors and proportions, allow clear space around the logo, and choose a background that keeps the lettering legible.



Horizontal logo (PNG)



Stacked logo (PNG)



Reverse logo (PNG)

Press inquiries

Yvonne Fleener, President & CEO

For interviews, photographs or filming, contact Yvonne. For a photo request, include your outlet, deadline, and the people or location you hope to feature so the team can provide an approved image and caption.

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