

Karmê Chöling

FAMILY CAMP Rite of Passage Program

The Rite of Passage (ROP) program is geared toward reaching children at a time when their awareness of themselves as an individual on this earth is beginning to strengthen.

Commonly, most very young children are engaged in fantasy play within the safety of their family's embrace, both physically and emotionally. At about 8 or 9 years old, many children reach a place when their feet begin to be more firmly planted on the ground. While still active in their imagination and fantasy play, children at this age will also turn their gaze out from the safety net of their family and begin to explore their own place in this world. They begin to have a stronger awareness of their own strengths as they explore their options of engaging in the world in various ways, from playful to aggressive. It is a time when we, as elders, can address and support this awakening awareness.

Through this week of hands-on activities, it is suggested to the children that they can trust their own direct experience of the elements of earth, water, fire, and air. The practice of meditation during the program also gives the children much appreciated quiet space for becoming familiar with the experience of basic goodness.

Because this program is based on these fundamental changes in a child's growth, please think carefully about whether your child is ready for ROP this summer. There is no reason to push them along in their journey. This will allow for a richer and deeper experience for them. The ROP program is very applicable to all children 8 to 10 years old. If you are unsure, then we recommend waiting for another year.

The Rite of Passage program includes a beautiful concluding ceremony on the last day of Family Camp. Your child should bring along something to offer during the ceremony. This is a symbolic gesture of something that represents his or her childhood (ie; a book, a car, a stuffed animal, a blanket). It should be something that might be a little hard to part with, but not something that will make your child cry. As this is a celebratory occasion, it is suggested that you bring along a small gift for your child to offer after the conclusion of the ceremony. Your child may also wish to dress up a bit for the ceremony.