

Voices of the Territory: Hermeneutic Interpretations on the Meaning of Ancestral Medicines in Early Childhood Health and Well-Being

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Main Research Line: Culture, Identity, and Independence. **Associated Line:** Intellectual Independence in Intercultural Contexts. **Thematic Axis:** Culture and Knowledge

How to cite this article: María Elizabeth Tovar, "Voices of the territory: hermeneutic interpretations on the meaning of ancestral medicines in early childhood health and well-being" (2026), (1,20).

Received: 09/03/2026

Revised: 12/03/2026

Accepted: 19/03/2026

ABSTRACT

Early childhood health cannot be fully understood if the body of knowledge that Indigenous peoples have built and transmitted over generations is ignored. In many Latin American communities, ancestral medicines constitute the first therapeutic resource that families turn to when a child falls ill; however, this wealth of knowledge is rarely recognized by formal health and education systems. This article aims to interpret hermeneutically the significance of ancestral medicines in the care and promotion of the well-being of young children, based on a bibliographic analysis of academic sources from the fields of intercultural education, ethnobotany, traditional medicine, and the social sciences. The methodology adopted is a bibliographic-hermeneutic approach, through which documents relevant to the research problem were selected, analyzed, and interpreted. The results show that ancestral medicines are not limited to isolated healing practices, but rather constitute an articulated system of knowledge that links nature, the body, the community, and spirituality. Furthermore, it is evident that the transmission of this knowledge occurs in everyday and relational spaces, and that its recognition in educational contexts can strengthen cultural identity and the holistic well-being of children. It is concluded that integrating this knowledge into pedagogical and health discourses represents a historical debt to the peoples who have preserved it.

Keywords: ancestral medicines, early childhood, hermeneutics, traditional knowledge, interculturality in health.

Biographical Sketch: Specialist in early childhood education. I joined the Niño Simón Early Childhood Education Center in 2010 and have been working as a classroom teacher since 2011 at the María Concepción Palacios y Blanco Early Childhood Education Center.