

## Here's What Researchers Say...

- Children who participated in the *Footprints* program had statistically-significant improvements in social competency compared to subjects who did not participate in the program.
- Teachers whose classes participated in the *Footprints* program witnessed students using the skills taught by the *Footprints* curriculum multiple times per week. Teachers also reported using lessons from the *Footprints* curriculum to reinforce concepts in the classroom.
- Teachers universally reported very high levels of satisfaction with the program. They indicated that *Footprints* was successful in engaging children and presented age- and grade-appropriate information on alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.
- Nearly 82% of parents of children participating in the *Footprints* program and who completed the survey indicated that the program influenced their child's behavior in a positive way.

Mercer Council is a private, non-profit, community-based health organization serving Mercer County. We have been providing quality prevention education, information, early intervention and referral services to county residents, businesses, schools, faith-based organizations, municipal alliances and social services agencies since 1978.

Mercer Council is a proponent of healthy lifestyles, working hard to minimize the incidence and impact of substance abuse on our county residents. We believe that substance abuse and violence are preventable through education and early development of life skills and that collaboration between communities and individuals can make a difference.



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# Footprints



## THE FIRST STEPS IN PREVENTION EDUCATION



# “Children Learn New Skills Each Week as the Soccer Season Progresses Towards the Championship Game.”

Research has clearly demonstrated that substance abuse prevention needs to begin at a very young age and continue to be reinforced throughout childhood and adolescence. However, most prevention programs are not designed to reach students until they enter middle and high school.

*Footprints for Life*™ is a research-based program. It is based on the Search Institute’s theory for developmental assets, and it incorporates research-based practices for teaching students new behaviors. Studies have shown that *Footprints* contributes to positive behavior change on both the individual and classroom level.

The goal of *Footprints* is to help young children build a strong foundation of life skills rooted in key social competencies: planning and decision-making practice, interpersonal skills, cultural competence, peer pressure, and peaceful conflict resolution —



*Footprints for Life* is now listed on the National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP) and is a New Jersey Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) - approved evidence-based program.

assets identified as promoting positive attitudes and behaviors.

Drawing from the latest research, *Footprints* starts earlier than many programs and teaches children the first steps of prevention and provides them with a healthy path to follow as they grow.

*Footprints* reaches children while their health-related attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors are at a formative stage; provides a resource for teachers to help identify potential problems; and opens the door for parents to have important discussions with their children at home. The program builds internal assets and teaches the important life skills students in grades two and three need to grow up healthy and drug-free.

Through the use of puppets and stories that feature “real life” situations experienced by a children’s soccer team, the program offers many opportunities for students to practice the new skills they have learned in a fun and non-threatening way.



*Footprints* is a six-week program taught during a regular classroom period for approximately 40 minutes each week. Weekly homework assignments and educational sheets not only reinforce the lessons between classes, but also involve parents in their child’s learning experience.

For more information, visit [www.footprintsforlife.org](http://www.footprintsforlife.org) or call the Mercer Council at (609) 396-5874.

**Social Competency: One category of the Search Institute’s internal assets.**

*Footprints* is specifically designed to build students’ social competencies, which include planning and decision-making skills, interpersonal skills, peaceful conflict resolution skills, cultural competence skills, and resistance skills.