Random drug testing of middle-school students may help prevent substance abuse, a six-year study of New Jersey students suggests.

Students who were randomly tested for drugs were less likely to use them in later years, according to the study, conducted by the Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey and Fairleigh Dickinson University.

The researchers found drug use by students in grades 6-8 is relatively rare, Newsworks reports. The study found that only about 1 percent of 8th graders say they have ever used illicit drugs, and only about 14 percent indicate that they have ever drunk alcohol, other than in circumstances where it's allowed, such as religious ceremonies.

Among students who were tested for drugs and alcohol, 6 percent said they had ever consumed alcohol. Lead researcher Dan Cassino said when middle-school students are tested for drugs, they realize drug use can get them in trouble.

He noted expanding random drug testing, while it might be effective, would be costly. "We still see a spike around the junior year of high school," Cassino said. "Once the kids get a car and get a job, all bets are off, and the rates of drug and alcohol use go through the roof; but that spike is much smaller among students who actually were randomly drug tested at some point." "These results show that student drug testing changes the environment of the school community and show they serve as an effective prevention strategy for the abuse of drugs and alcohol in their future,"

Angelo M. Valente, Executive Director of the Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey, said in a news release. "This study proves random drug testing in New Jersey middle schools helps prevent substance abuse."

Do you suspect that your child is abusing alcohol or using drugs? Are you worried? Have you noticed some changes with your child? As a parent, it is normal to be concerned. Listen to your intuitive voice and read on by clicking here.