

Case Study 1:



Timmy sleeping in his own bed?

History

- Timmy is an 8-year-old boy with Asperger's syndrome with near-typical language abilities.
- Timmy had slept in his parents' bed *every night of his life*.
- Previous attempts to get Timmy to sleep in his own bed had all failed due to tantrums and parental guilty feelings ("mommy, I love you, why can't I sleep in your bed?")

Ask yourself?

- Why did Timmy refuse to sleep in his own bed?
 - ◆ Was it because of his diagnosis?
 - The simplified answer: because he was better off in the short-term.
 - Sleeping in parents' bed = comfort and constant attention.
 - Sleeping in his own bed = less comfort and less attention, and maybe a little bit scary at first.
- Why did Timmy's parents let him sleep in their bed?



- Were they bad parents? No
- Did they not know how to stop it? No
- Their lives were also better off in the short-term by allowing the behavior to continue?
- They avoided tantrums?
- They avoided feeling guilty for making their child with Asperger's be sad?

•But what were the longer-term consequences of Timmy sleeping in his parents' bed every night?

- Delaying Timmy's development: he won't always be able to sleep in his parent's bed and it will only get harder to learn, the longer the habit goes on.
- Damaging to Timmy's parents' marriage.
- No time alone.
- No life outside of parenting.

Timmy learned to like to sleep in his own bed!

So what to do?

♦ Teach Timmy to be proud of himself for sleeping in his own bed.

•How? Here was the plan:

- Decorated his room with all his favorite themes
- Put on his favorite lullaby music
- Talked to Timmy about it everyday for several days
- Told Timmy the rules: "Mommy will read you three stories and then you need to sleep in your own bed like a "big boy."
- Don't let him out of his room
- If he wakes up after falling asleep, check on him, give him a hug and kiss, and then say goodnight again
- Throw a big party to celebrate Timmy's achievements the next day!



Did it work? Yes

- Timmy cried for two hours and said many things that broke his parents' hearts ("I'm going to cry forever")
- Timmy tried to run out of his room several times.

- Timmy ended up sleeping through the rest of the night in his own bed, for the first time in his life,
- Timmy posted a sign on his bedroom door the next day that read “Bed for sale.”
- Within a few weeks, Timmy began to like sleeping in his own bed and was outwardly proud of himself for doing it.

- Two years later, Timmy had slept in his bed *every* night for both years.

Whenever a child wants something, he/she has two choices:

1. Try to get it in an appropriate way.
2. Try to get it in an inappropriate way.

Helping your child have appropriate behavior means making that choice easy for them by:

1. Give them what they want for good behavior.
2. Don't give them what they want for destructive behavior.
3. Make it EASY for them to do the good behavior
(take baby steps).