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Monday, April 9, 2001

JACKSONVILLE, Fla.--A 10 -year-old girl was bitten by a police dog after officers who believed an alarm had gone off in the home put the dog in through a window.

The address given to police by the alarm company was wrong, police said.

The girl, Devin Batts, was at home with her sister and brothers Friday while their mother was at work. She was lying in her bedroom when the dog came through the house.

"We didn't hear anything," Devin said. "I just saw a dog jump on the bed and grab my leg and drag me off the bed."

Devin had to have eight stitches to close the wound on her leg.

K-9 supervisor Sgt. J.P. Butler said officers had knocked and called at the door before putting the dog inside a high, open window, but there was no response.

The children's mother, Lavora Felton, had already left for her job with a janitorial service. The children are told not to answer the door when she is gone. "My kids don't want to live there anymore," said Felton. "They are traumatized."

Butler said a K-9 officer hoisted the dog, Taz, through a window and told the dog to lay still inside the house. Butler said the dog responded to movement in the house before the officer could get inside.

"Procedurally, I don't know what we could have done differently," Butler said.

Felton said the children are told that if they need help they are to call their grandmother or other family members who live nearby.

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