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HEADLINE: Owner charged with child abuse after dog attack

DATELINE: ROGERSVILLE, Tenn.

BODY:

The owner of a dog that attacked a 7-year-old girl was charged with aggravated child abuse because he knew the dog was aggressive, authorities said.

Mark "Bucket" Kustosik, 48, told Hawkins County Sheriff's Department Sgt. Tony Allen that he was watching the dog, a retriever/chow mix, play with Samantha Roberts outside his home when the attack occurred Tuesday.

"He became uneasy because of the dog's behavior and yelled for the dog to come to him," Allen stated in his report.

After several minutes, Kustosik allowed the dog back outside and that's when it attacked Roberts, according to the report.

Roberts received emergency treatment at the Hawkins County Memorial Hospital Tuesday night and then was transferred to the Knoxville Children's Hospital. She received 32 staples and four stitches to her head as a result of the injuries.

When Allen went to Kustosik's residence to investigate the attack, Kustosik told the officer the dog had bitten another child this past spring.

The sheriff's department consulted with Assistant Attorney General Doug Godbee before charging Kustosik with child abuse.

"That charge was appropriate because he was responsible for causing serious bodily injury to a child," Godbee said. "Obviously he didn't physically harm the child himself, but he allowed it to happen by allowing his dog, which had bitten people in the past, to run at large."

Kustosik told Allen that he shot the dog following the attack. The sheriff's department took the dog's head to test for rabies.

In addition to the abuse charge, Kustosik was charged with allowing an animal to run loose.