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Boy hurt in dog attack

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An Independence boy is recovering after being attacked by the family dog Friday morning.

The 3-year-old was found by neighbors shortly before 10:30 a.m. in the 1200 block of South Franklin Avenue, near Van Horn High School. Police Officer Michael Valentine said the boy had wandered outside to play with the family's year-and-a-half old German shepherd when the dog unexpectedly turned and attacked the boy.

The child has several cuts to the head, arms and legs. Although there was a significant amount of blood at the scene due to the injuries, the toddler was alert and orientated when taken to Children's Mercy Hospital. Independence police said the injuries do not appear to be life threatening.

Dana Powell, supervisor of Animal Services in Independence, said because no one witnessed the attack, there is no way to know what happened to make the dog attack the child. Neighbors heard the boy screaming, but no one was outside when the incident happened.

According to police, the dog was still on a restraint device after neighbors rescued the boy. The boy's mother told police the dog was outside because "she did not trust the dog to be inside with her minor children."

Even after the boy had been taken to the hospital and animal control was trying to load the dog into a

transport wagon, the dog appeared to snap at those trying to handle it, Valentine said in his report. The family has owned the dog less than two months.

"No one really knows what happened," Powell said. "The child went outside and was bit by the dog."

In addition, Powell said vaccinations could not be documented when the dog was taken by animal control officers. It will remain quarantined for 10 days at the Independence Animal Shelter and be observed for signs of rabies.

"Because we could not verify the dog had its rabies vaccinations, it will be on a 10-day hold," she said.

"At that time, the family can decide to take the dog home or it will be destroyed."