

## Dog mauls boy at street party

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Article from: 

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**MINUTES after being mauled by a dog, a Greenbank eight-year-old asked his parents if he would still be able to play football the next day.**

Aidan was with his parents and siblings at a neighbourhood barbecue on April 5, when the neighbour's Japanese akita dog escaped from its pen and attacked the child in front of six adults and several other children.

Belinda, who asked her surname not be used, said although covered in blood her son was calm as her husband, Rob, rushed him home to ring the ambulance.

"He asked if he could play football the next day," she said.

"I wonder what was going through his mind at that point, as he looked up at us and said: 'If I die, I love you guys'."

Aidan was rushed into surgery at the Mater Children's Hospital, where he ended up with more than 300 stitches throughout his face, head, tongue and right hand, as well as two skin grafts – one on his right ear and one between the corner of his right eye and nose.

Belinda, who owns a border collie, said after receiving many "narrow-minded" comments about what happened to her youngest child, she wanted to set the record straight.

"This was an unprovoked attack and it happened about one metre from us. We would not take our children into a dangerous environment," she said.

The family had joined other neighbours at the barbecue and were all at the front of the house. The akita was in a pen some distance away at the back of the house but had escaped.

Belinda said the children had been playing cricket in front of the house and had just been called over to the patio to have some food when the dog suddenly reappeared from around the corner. She said it had struggled free of its owner just before it was put back in the pen.

"It appeared, looked at my husband who said 'stand still', and then looked at Aidan and suddenly was into him," she said. "We thought the dog was about to give a little snap but then it pushed Aidan up against the house and was growling, snarling and shaking him."

Belinda said she and two other adults immediately kicked and pulled the dog off Aidan.

"Before this I was one of those who would have said I wonder what the child did to provoke the dog, but this was unprovoked and this was no simple dog bite," she said.

"This was a mauling and it all happened in about 15 seconds."

The owners of the akita had the dog destroyed within hours.

Aidan said he did not remember much of the attack. He said it was lucky the dog did not attack the owners' youngest child, a 13-month-old baby.

"If the dog had gotten that baby it would have been like a rag doll," he said.

After hearing of the dog attack, RSPCA Queensland Animal Training and Behaviour Centre manager Ros Taber said the dog could have been reacting from instinct or fear.

She emphasised the behaviour was not indicative of the breed. "It's the particular dog, not the breed. From the dog's point of view there were strangers in the yard. This particular breed of dog is . . . very loyal . . . aware of its own properties and boundaries," she said.

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RECOVERING ... Aidan after the harrowing attack.

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