

Dogs maul 3-year-old boy in Central community
Family friend hopes attack raises awareness of owning multiple pets

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A family friend of a 3-year-old boy who was mauled by a pack of loose dogs Sunday said she hopes the attack will raise awareness about the dangers of owning multiple pets.

A sheriff's spokesman said 12 dogs, all owned by a neighbor, attacked a small boy who was playing in his front yard at a residence on Thigpen Road in the Central community northwest of Lufkin. Lt. Pete Cooper of the Angelina County Sheriff's Office said the boy had multiple bites on his body and was life-flighted to a Houston hospital. The child was listed in stable condition early Monday afternoon, Cooper said.

Stacy Martin, who was visiting her mother at a house near where the attack happened, said the incident was an accident that could have been prevented.

"It was a bad situation looking to get incredibly worse, and it did," she said. "Having that many animals is not publicly safe."

The dogs escaped from a 6-foot-high chain-linked fence, Cooper said. The fence had electric wiring on the bottom of it to prevent the dogs from digging out, but Cooper said investigators thought the dogs were able to escape through an unlocked fence gate.

Martin said the mother's screams prompted her to walk outside.

"I could hear the panic in her voice. (The baby's mother) came running toward me with the dogs on her heels," she said. "We fought the dogs off until the cops got there."

Martin said the boy had been bitten on his face, neck and inner thighs.

"He was horrible," she said. "Thankfully shock had kicked in."

Angelina County Animal Control took custody of the dogs and has placed them in quarantine as the investigation continues, Cooper said. The dogs were described as mixed breeds of Collie, Labrador and Hound.

Martin said she hopes the attack will prompt county residents to consider a leash law or tougher restrictions on pet owners. There is no leash law requirement in the county.

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