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Dog attacks 8-year-old Tampa boy

Reported by: Erik Waxler
Email: ewaxler@wfts.com

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TOWN & COUNTRY, FL -- A dog viciously attacked an 8-year-old boy inside a mobile home on Mt. Vernon street in the Citrus Park area.

The boy's mother told ABC Action News that her son is out of the hospital, but is sedated and has several staples in his head.

Hillsborough County Animal Services investigated and says the dog was a large mastiff-bulldog mix.

"The story that we have been given is that the child was reaching for a kitty cat that was also in the area. At that point the dog reacted and attacked the child," says Animal Services spokesperson Marti Ryan.

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The mother says she was only thinking of her son's safety when she chased the dog off with a baseball bat. But for several hours the dog was on the loose in Town & Country.

"Obviously that's not the best course of action in our case because we would like to contain the dog," said Ryan. "We want to make sure the dog has been vaccinated for rabies

or hold the dog in quarantine for a certain period of time and obviously keep the dog out of the community if it's a public safety risk."

Neighbor Joe Flegar says lots of people around here have similar dogs as pets. "It could be one of 50 different dogs." He was worried this one could attack someone else. "There's a few kids in the neighborhood. But if there's one that's loose, it should be apprehended."

Late Tuesday afternoon, the dog was found and brought back to the home where an Animal Control officer was scheduled to pick it up. Officials say it's never a good idea to take in a dog that you don't know very well. "You don't know their triggers, you don't know their temperament, and you put them in a situation with a small child, and another small pet unsupervised," said Ryan.

The victim's mother tells ABC Action News the dog did not belong to them. She says another man who lives at their house was pet sitting. And she says up until the attack, the dog was fine, even getting along with her three cats. Once Animal Services picks up the dog, it will be in quarantine and checked for rabies. The adults involved in this case may face charges.

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