During the past 20 years, Anna Salter has interviewed thousands of sex offenders. What she learned is that we as parents and as employers are unprepared to recognize danger. We'd rather trust someone than to acknowledge the bad side of a “nice guy.”

In her book, *Predators, Pedophiles, Rapists, and Other Sex Offenders: Who They Are, How They Operate, and How We Can Protect Ourselves and Our Children*, Salter warns that most youth victims are not kids taken by gunpoint, but they go willingly because the predator knows exactly how to win the trust of the child and his or her parent(s).

Unfortunately, we rarely think of the local coach, uncle, neighbor, or church choir director when “predator” is mentioned. However, “In one study, 30 percent of sadists who had killed three or more people had reputations as solid citizens” (Salter, 2003, p. 34). Also alarming was that all the offenders studied in one group had been reported before by children to some adult and the reports had been ignored, increasing an offender’s confidence in his ability to get away with it. We are not “hearing” our children talk about threats or crimes against them.

Like many other organizations across the country, Extension youth programs are developing policies that are focused on establishing safe environments for our children. The best defense against predators is wisdom. Working together and listening to our youth will help protect them from predators.
Listening, learning, and living together: it's the science of life. “Family Album” is a co-production of University of Florida IFAS Extension, the Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, and of WUFT-FM. If you'd like to learn more, please visit our website at [http://www.familyalbumradio.org](http://www.familyalbumradio.org).

To listen to the radio broadcast:

[http://www.radiosource.net/radio_stories/predators.mp3](http://www.radiosource.net/radio_stories/predators.mp3)

[http://www.radiosource.net/radio_stories/predators.wav](http://www.radiosource.net/radio_stories/predators.wav)

**Reference**