

You may have heard about Snapchat, the mobile app that allows users to capture videos and pictures that self destruct after a few seconds. When a user sends a message they get to decide whether it will live for between 1 and 10 seconds. Snapchat debuted in 2011 for iPhone (iPad, iPod touch) and is also available for Android devices. The app is not intended for users under 13 and is rated 12+ in the iTunes app store.

- Snapcat is not for children under 13. Children under 13 are prohibited but since Snapchat doesn't ask for age on signup, parents or others need to report if a child under 13 is using it.
- To send a message to someone on Snapchat you need to know their user name and add them to your "My Friends" list.
- By default anyone who knows your username or phone number can send you a message, but you can configure Snapchat to only accept messages from people on your friends list.
- You can block a user by finding their name in your friends list, swiping to the right on iOS or long-pressing in Android and selecting Edit.

Advice for parents

My advice for parents is to talk with your kids about Snapchat, Instagram and other photo-sharing apps. Don't lecture them, don't panic and don't expect the worst. Just ask them if they use these apps and what they're doing with them. Chances are your kid already knows not to do anything really stupid, but it never hurts to calmly impart a little adult wisdom.