Snapchat

What is SNAPCHAT?
Snapchat is an app used to send photos to friends. Once viewed, the photo self-destructs in a matter of seconds.

How Snapchat works.
Snap a picture – most popular photos are "selfies" (picture of yourself) and select a friend or group of friends to send it to. Whoever you send a picture to must also use Snapchat. Before sending, you choose how long the picture will be available for viewing, from 1 to 10 seconds. When your friend receives the "snap" they must press and hold to view the picture. When the time is up, the picture disappears.

So what is the concern?
- The app is not intended for users under 13 and is rated 12+ in the iTunes app store.
- Most devices these days allow a screenshot/grab which can easily be done in seconds meaning it could be shared with others (although you will be notified by the service of any screenshot-taking).
- It is tempting, particularly for teenagers, to send **any** kind of picture believing that it cannot be shared or saved nor that pictures won't end up tagged and forever associated with you like on Facebook. The usual (healthy) inner voice of restraint may be passed over in lieu of impulsive sharing.
- Snapchat may offer a false sense of security for young people who think they can send an embarrassing picture without consequences.
- Snapchat's own privacy agreement allows for the fact that a picture may not be immediately deleted from their servers *"Although we attempt to delete image data as soon as possible after the message is transmitted, we cannot guarantee that the message content will be deleted in every case."*

Rated 12+ for the following:

- Infrequent/Mild Sexual Content and Nudity
- Infrequent/Mild Profanity or Crude Humor
- Infrequent/Mild Mature/Suggestive Themes
- Infrequent/Mild Alcohol, Tobacco, or Drug Use or References

Managing the risk in Snapchat
In SETTINGS you can change the option from "Everyone" to "My Friends to only allow friends (those you have added to your list of Friends in Snapchat) to send you "snaps".

You can use restriction settings to make sure it can't be downloaded by the younger set.

You can also block a friend from sending pictures to you. (Maybe you added a friend and they start bombarding you with pictures all day long and you cannot get them to stop….well block 'em and they'll stop). To block someone find their name in your list of friends, swipe to the right, click Edit and click Block.

You may find that Snapchat is already in heavy rotation on your child's mobile device so you should review their list of friends. Are there any you don't know? Any older friends? Remove unknown names. The unfortunate reality is that 20% of teens have sent or posted nude or seminude photographs or videos of themselves.

Ongoing discussions with your children about internet safety and the consequences of sharing is a must.
If it's not Snapchat it will be the next new app on the block!