Nine Things to Check for in a SPED Phonics Program

There are plenty of phonics programs out there | Is yours setting your students up for success?

	ROBOKIND PHONICS	PROGRAM 1	PROGRAM 2
Aligned to the Science of Reading	✓	☐	☐
Systematic Scope & Sequence	✓	☐	☐
Direct (Explicit) Instruction	✓	☐	☐
Multi-Sensory Activities	✓	☐	☐
Articulation Supports	✓	☐	☐
Progress Monitoring & Assessments	✓	☐	☐
Aligns to your Professional Learning	✓	☐	☐
Research and Evidence-Based	✓	☐	☐
Approved by Teachers	✓	☐	☐

Aligned to the Science of Reading: For students in Special Education, acquiring essential phonics skills can be difficult. The Science of Reading is an interdisciplinary approach that draws upon principles and processes across linguistics, neuroscience, and education, and allows us to understand and implement the most effective methods for teaching and supporting reading development. Phonics programs rooted in the Science of Reading can allow learners with unique needs, reading disabilities, and learning differences to develop the ability to learn – and love – to read!

Systematic Scope and Sequence: Phonics instruction is critical for students to learn to read, focusing on the relationship between letters and sounds. Does the phonics program you're considering offer a systematic (or sequential) approach for teaching the progression of these relationships?

Direct (Explicit) Instruction: Students have better outcomes when learning to read via direct (explicit) instruction. Does the program you're considering instruct students in a manner that is clear and unambiguous?

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Multi Scensory Activities: These multi-sensory strategies, in alignment with the methodologies promoted by Orton-Gillingham and others, help students make more neural connections with different learning inputs and help foster the retention of skills.
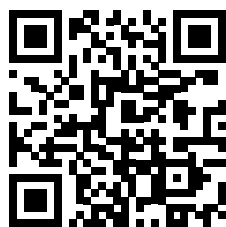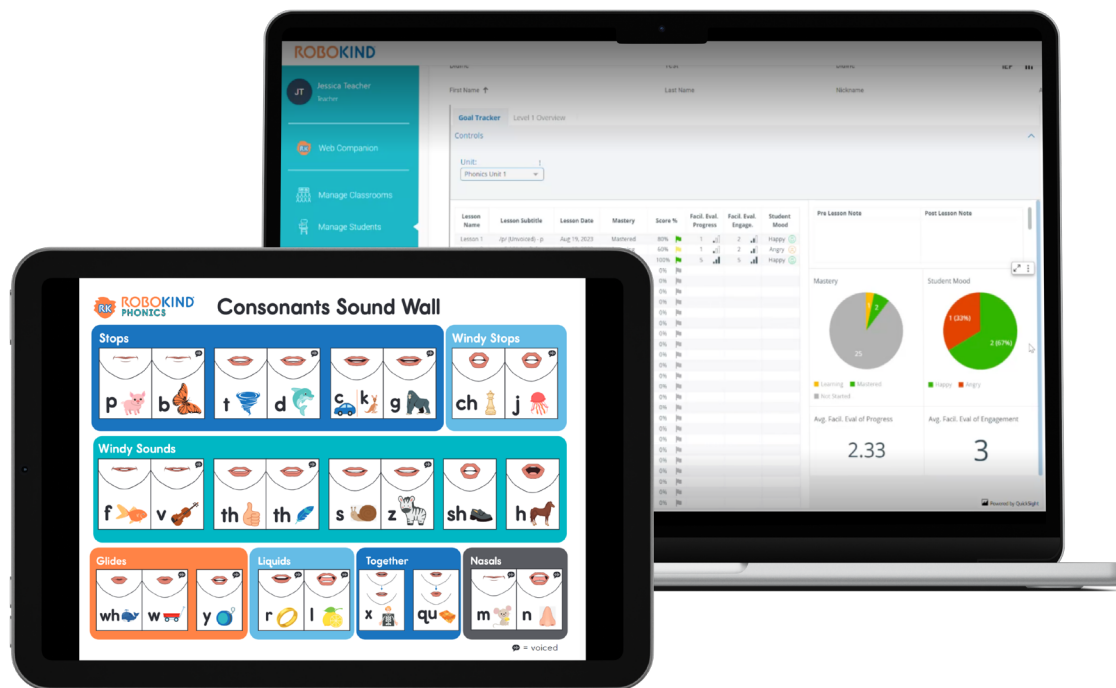
Articulation Supports: Articulation support is a key component in aiding students' understanding and ability to distinguish sounds. It is an important building block to the student's ability to make a connection between the sound and the letter that represents it, and the type of support offered can be pivotal to your student's success. Visual supports, such as x-ray visuals or embedded videos have been shown to aid student mastery.

Progress Monitoring and Assessments: Research has demonstrated the importance of aligning learning target goals with assessments and checking students' progress with smaller milestones. How does the program align to your student's targeted IEP goals? What types of assessments are offered to monitor goal achievement?

Aligns to your Professional Learning: If your educators are participating in targeted professional development opportunities like those found in LETRS or other programs, your product will need to follow a similar pedagological approach to student learning.

Research and Evidence-Based: Implementing evidence-based resources increases the likelihood of student's achieving their goals and accelerating outcomes. Has the program you're considering published any research demonstrating the curriculum's efficacy?

Approved by Teachers: Research indicates that teachers have a sizable impact on student outcomes, and it follows that their voice matters in product selection. If they don't approve, use, and celebrate the resource you provide, you won't get the impact you are hoping for.

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