No studies of the Wilson Reading System® that fall within the scope of the Students with Learning Disabilities review protocol meet What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) evidence standards. The lack of studies meeting WWC evidence standards means that, at this time, the WWC is unable to draw any conclusions based on research about the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the Wilson Reading System® on students with learning disabilities.

The Wilson Reading System® is a reading and writing program developed by Barbara Wilson and distributed by Wilson Language Training. It provides a curriculum for teaching reading and spelling to individuals of any age who have difficulty with written language. The Wilson Reading System® directly teaches the structure of words in the English language, aiming to help students learn the coding system for reading and spelling. The program provides interactive lesson plans and uses a sequential system with extensive controlled text. The Wilson Reading System® is structured to progress from phoneme segmentation to more challenging tasks, and seeks to improve sight word knowledge, fluency, vocabulary, oral expressive language development, and reading comprehension.
Program Description

The WWC identified 28 studies of the Wilson Reading System® for students with learning disabilities that were published or released between 1989 and 2009.

Twenty-four studies are out of the scope of the Students with Learning Disabilities review protocol and are ineligible for review.

• Eight studies are not a primary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention.
• Nine studies do not use a comparison group.
• Seven studies have samples that are not aligned with the protocol—for five studies, the sample does not include at least 50% students with learning disabilities, and two studies use samples outside of the age or grade range specified in the protocol.

References

Studies that fall outside the Students with Learning Disabilities review protocol or do not meet evidence standards

Arndt, E. J. (2007). Wilson Fluency/Basic. Tallahassee, FL: Florida Center for Reading Research. The study is ineligible for review because it is not a primary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention, such as a meta-analysis or research literature review.

Brunner, N. (2005). The light bulb goes on. NEA Today, 23(8), 26–26. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.


Dellinger, K. A. (2003). The effect of the Wilson Reading Program on spelling skills in an inclusive sixth grade setting. Unpub-

lished master's thesis, Rowan University, Glassboro, NJ. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.

Dickson, S., & Bursack, W. D. (1999). Implementing a model for preventing reading failure: A report from the field. Learning Disabilities Research and Practice, 14, 191–202. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.


because it is not a primary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention, such as a meta-analysis or research literature review.


Gustavson, K., & Watson, N. (1995). Wilson Reading and Reading to Read. Augusta, ME: Division of Adult & Community Education. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample is not within the specified age or grade range.

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Potter, M. N. (1998). *Can students make decoding gains and build reading confidence by participating in a specialized reading program, utilizing the Wilson Reading System, and a “whole language” component?* Unpublished master’s thesis, Gratz College, Melrose Park, PA. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.
Reuter, H. B. (2006). Phonological awareness instruction for middle school students with disabilities: A scripted multisensory intervention. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Oregon, 2006). Dissertation Abstracts International, 68(02A), 117–457. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because the measures of effectiveness cannot be attributed solely to the intervention—there was only one unit assigned to one or both conditions.

Richer, D. E. (2004). The effectiveness of the Wilson Reading System on word recognition of second and third grade special education resource students. Unpublished master’s thesis, Benedictine University, Lisle, IL. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because the measures of effectiveness cannot be attributed solely to the intervention—there was only one unit assigned to one or both conditions.

Rosica, H. E. (2005). The effectiveness of the Wilson Reading Program in improving spelling and decoding skills of a selected sample of special needs children. Unpublished master’s thesis, Rowan University, Glassboro, NJ. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because the measures of effectiveness cannot be attributed solely to the intervention—there was only one unit assigned to one or both conditions.


Wood, F. (2002). Wilson literacy solutions: Evidence of effectiveness. Wake Forest University 2002 data analysis. Unpublished manuscript. The study is ineligible for review because the WWC could not confirm that at least 50% of the sample was classified as students with learning disabilities.