10 award-winning science and coding programs compared for kids

Peabody blog · Science · updated 2026-11-08

Gizmos, Mystery Science, CoderZ, KIBO, YoungWonks and five more award winners: how each teaches science or coding, who it is for, and what none of them offer.

Science and coding awards go to five kinds of product: simulations, video lessons with a hands-on activity, robot-coding ladders, live tutors and screen-free robot kits. This list picks ten that won between 2021 and 2026, and says what each does and where the information stops. It draws on our study of 949 award wins. Two limits: vendor pages for Gizmos and Mystery Science refused our fetch, so those entries rest on search summaries and reviews, and we could not watch any product being used. Prices are from third parties and may be old.

1. ExploreLearning Gizmos (simulations). Interactive browser simulations with exploration sheets and a teacher guide, for older elementary through high school. It won CODiE awards for virtual lab in 2022 and STEM in 2024 and 2025. Price: not published; a school or district quote. Evidence: the company's own analysis; we found no independent peer-reviewed study.

2. Mystery Science (video plus hands-on). A lesson opens with a video asking a child's question, the teacher pauses for talk, then a second video leads a hands-on activity with household materials. For kindergarten through grade 5, aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards. Price: third parties list about $89 to $109 a year for homeschool; a free trial has run. Catch: it is designed to be projected by a teacher or parent, not used by a child alone.

3. BrainPOP Science (video and quiz). Short animated videos with quizzes, a CODiE winner in 2023. A school licence was listed near $1,900 in a 2023–24 sheet.

4. STEMscopes (curriculum). A full science curriculum aligned to the NGSS, an EdTech Cool Tool winner in 2021 and 2022. We found little on its screens.

5. Labster (virtual labs). Simulated lab work for high school and college, a repeat EdTech Breakthrough winner. Quote-only price.

6. CoderZ (robot-coding ladder). For grades 6 to 12: block coding then Java or Python, with a 3D simulated robot and optional real robots. A CODiE winner in 2021. A 2018 review listed $6.25 a month for home use.

7. Robotify (robot-coding ladder). A CODiE coding winner in 2022. We found no detail beyond the award.

8. YoungWonks (live tutor). A tutoring service, not software: a 45-minute one-to-one video class that moves from Scratch to Python to Arduino. CODiE winner for coding in 2024, 2025

and 2026. About $277 for four weeks in an undated listing.

9. KIBO (screen-free robot). Wooden blocks with a scanner that a child assembles to program a robot, for ages 4 to 7. An EdTech Cool Tool winner in 2023, at $399 to $499 in a press release.

10. Ozobot MetaBot (screen-free robot). A small robot that follows lines and colours a child draws. An EdTech Breakthrough coding winner in 2023.

What the ten share

- The adult is the buyer and the driver. Most are projected by a teacher or run by a tutor.
- Science and coding live apart. No product combined simulations, stories and coding.
- Prices are hidden. Most are quote or trial.

What none of them offer

- A front door a young child can walk through alone.
- A plain account of what is kept about the child.
- Independent evidence; the claims we found were the makers' own.
- Science, code and stories together for ages 5 to 8.

How to choose

- Ages 4 to 7: a screen-free kit with a grown-up beside the child.
- Ages 6 to 9: video lessons you can run at the table.
- Older and keen: a ladder or a live tutor.

Where Peabody fits

Peabody (stories for kids) is free through the end of 2026, with no ads and no sign-up, and keeps science, coding and stories in one place. It has won none of these awards and is not a full science curriculum. Start from the library.

Sources

- CODiE, EdTech Breakthrough and EdTech Cool Tool winner lists, read November 2026.
- Tech & Learning's 2018 CoderZ review, KinderLab's KIBO press release, YoungWonks's FAQ and vendor pages, as set out in our study notes.

Free at peabody.kids/blog/10-award-winning-science-and-coding-programs-compared