

PRESCHOOL PAGES

March 2026



UNITED WAY
Pickens County

WOMEN
UNITED

14 Sites. 14 Stories. One Mission.

Preschool Pages looks a little different at every site, and that's by design. At every session across Pickens County, parents and caregivers don't just drop off their children. They sit beside them. They learn alongside them. An educator models simple literacy strategies— shared reading, songs, movement— that families can carry home and use every day.

At McKissick Academy of Science and Technology, they've taken that model and made it unmistakably theirs. They don't call it Preschool Pages. They call it Pup Tales, because their youngest learners are future MAST Sharks.

That kind of ownership matters. When a school takes Preschool Pages and weaves it into their identity, it stops being a program families attend and becomes a tradition families look forward to.

“One of the most rewarding parts of Pup Tales is watching the growth not only in our young learners, but in the strength of our program,” says Fran Carden, the Preschool Pages lead teacher at McKissick. “This year, attendance increased significantly, and families continue to share positive feedback.”

That growth is showing up in the families, too. “I wish I had brought my daughter sooner to Pup Tales,” one parent shared in January.

Your support makes it possible for Preschool Pages to show up in 14 sites across Pickens County, each one adapting the program to fit their families.

Fran says it best: “We intentionally blend fun with foundational early learning to ensure that every child and every family feels welcome, engaged, and excited to return. At McKissick, Pup Tales is more than a monthly session, it's where our youngest Sharks begin building confidence, skills, and a love of learning.”

She Didn't Want to Let Go of Her Mother's Hand

It was the first Preschool Pages session, and three-year-old Lily stood frozen in the doorway. The room was loud. The other children were strangers. The teacher was smiling at her, but Lily buried her face in her mother's sleeve.

By the fourth session, Lily was the first one through the door.

She had a favorite seat at the reading circle. She knew the hand motions to the welcome song. She'd learned to write the first letter of her name with a fat green crayon and she made sure everyone saw it.

When Lily gripped that crayon, she was developing the fine motor skills she'll need to write. When she joined the reading circle, she was learning to listen, sit with a group, and follow along with a story. When she made a friend during craft time, she was building the social and emotional skills that research tells us matter just as much as academics.

None of that happens in a textbook. It happens in moments... a paintbrush in a small hand, a new word attempted out loud, a shy wave across the table at a child who will become a friend. Your gift to Preschool Pages made each of those moments possible.

That transformation happened because of you.

Your support of Women United's Preschool Pages program gave children like Lily and their caregivers the chance to experience school as a happy, safe place, many of them for the very first time. This year, Preschool Pages reached families at 14 sites across Pickens County, building the skills that children need before they ever set foot in a kindergarten classroom.



The Heart of Preschool Pages? The Teachers.

What makes Preschool Pages so special? Ask any family and they'll tell you- it's the teachers.

Our Preschool Pages teachers don't just show up. They select the books. They create the activities. They pour their hearts into making Preschool Pages THE program where everyone wants to be.

And their "day jobs"? Just as impressive. They are Reading Coaches, Media Specialists, Title I Coordinators, and more. They bring deep expertise to every session, making sure it's engaging, fun, age-appropriate, and truly grow little readers.

Here's the part that will blow you away: this herculean effort is entirely voluntary, outside their normal school duties. They are our heroes, without question.

For many families, Preschool Pages is their very first experience with the school their child will attend. Our teachers make sure every family feels welcome, part of a community, and equipped with ways to support learning at home.

THIS is why Preschool Pages works. Because of teachers like these.



Families Tell the Story Best

How Preschool Pages is Shaping Confident, Curious Learners

We can talk all day about what Preschool Pages does- the books, the songs, the craft projects, the school-readiness skills woven into every session. But the people who tell the story best? The grandparents, parents, and caregivers who watch their children light up, week after week.

Here's what they're seeing at home.

“My grandson has grown a lot in working with other kids. He will play with others and talk to teachers. He does a great job following directions. He is able to count to 5, identify and write his name, and identify letters.”

“My daughter is really learning to follow directions and continues to love the books she receives at every Preschool Pages session. She is growing in recognizing letters and letter sounds.”

“By the last session, he woke up and promptly announced, 'It's story time day!' He has become more confident and ready for school.”

“My granddaughter has really blossomed into a voracious reader since taking her to Preschool Pages. She insists that I take her to the Pickens library twice a week to choose her own books.”

Because of YOU, our littlest learners are falling in love with books, building confidence, and getting ready for “real” school where they'll walk through the door excited, prepared, and eager to learn.

They'll have you to thank for that.

And with your continued support, next year's class of little learners will have you to thank, too.

Women United: A Powerful Force for Education

What happens when a group of women who are fiercely passionate about children come together with one goal- making sure every child in Pickens County is ready to learn?

You get Women United.

United Way of Pickens County's Women United is made up of former and current educators, mothers, grandmothers, and community leaders. They come from different backgrounds and bring different experiences, but they share one unshakeable belief: children who are prepared for school have the greatest chance to succeed.

And they put that belief into action.

The Women United council works tirelessly to ensure Preschool Pages has the funding to deliver high-quality, evidence-based, and PROVEN programming for families. When you donate to Women United's early education programs like Preschool Pages, you can trust that every dollar is used wisely to support our littlest learners.

They also host the incredibly popular annual Luncheon for Literacy, the signature fundraiser that makes this important work possible.

Want to get involved? Follow us on social media or visit the Women United webpage at uwpickens.org/women-united.

PRESCHOOL PAGES 2025 Impact at a Glance



355
Children Served



102
Total Sessions



14
Sites

- ★ 1,063 Books Distributed
Putting stories into children's hands
- ★ 83% Ages 2-5
Serving children in the most critical early years
- ★ 82% Show awareness that print tells a story
- ★ 94% Pretend to write with scribbles and pictures





Writing the Next Chapter of Preschool Pages

Preschool Pages has always been about meeting families where they are. Sometimes that means a school library. Sometimes it means a tiny house.

As a staff member at West End Elementary, Ruthie Chapman used to bring Preschool Pages to Westgate Apartments and read with little ones right on the front porch. She called it Porch Pals. That experience planted a seed, and when she retired and joined the Women United Council, she knew exactly where to take it next: the Dream Center's Opportunity Village.

The Opportunity Village is a residential program that empowers women on their path to restoration and self-sufficiency. Using a "tiny house" model, the village provides housing for single women and women with children. For the moms with young children, Preschool Pages is now part of the experience- led by Ruthie, with support from fellow Women United Council volunteers and Dream Center staff.

We'll be honest. This pilot has been a learning experience. Sessions happen after dinner, when families are winding down. The group is

always changing as families move through different stages of their journey. It took time to build trust and find the right rhythm.

But good programs adapt. Ruthie met the moment, leaning into something quieter and gentler. A typical session might include singing "This Little Light of Mine" with Ruthie on the ukulele, reading a story together, then letting the children match toy animals to characters in the book. The older children become leaders, helping guide the little ones. In many ways, it has become a bedtime story time, a wind-down where moms and little ones sit together with a book. And that is still the heart of what Preschool Pages has always been.

And here's one detail we especially love: each child receives their own copy of the book. Not one per family. One per child. For children who may have very little to call their own, that book is theirs.

This partnership is still growing. But meeting families exactly where they are- even when "where they are" is complicated- is exactly the kind of work your support makes possible.

The Next Story Starts With You

Every gift writes a new chapter for a young child in Pickens County.

You've just read their stories.

The grandmother whose granddaughter now insists on two library trips a week. The little boy who wakes up and announces, "It's story time day!" The children at Opportunity Village who each get their own copy of the book to take home.

These moments are only possible because someone- someone like you- made the decision to give.

But here's what keeps us up at night: 60% of children in Pickens County still lack the skills they need to start kindergarten ready to learn. There are more children out there who haven't found Preschool Pages yet. More families who need what you've helped build.

Will you help us reach them?

Your gift today puts books in small hands, trained teachers in front of eager learners, and parents side by side with their children- building confidence, curiosity, and a love of learning that lasts a lifetime.

Every child deserves to walk through the kindergarten door ready. Your gift makes that possible.



Yes! I want to help write a child's next story.

- \$50 – helps a child start their story
- \$125 – sponsors a child for an entire year of Preschool Pages
- \$250 – sponsors two children

Enclosed is my best gift to help write the next story!

Support young children today:

uwpickens.org/books | PO Box 96 Easley, SC 29641 | 864-850-7094



Scan with your phone's camera to donate securely online.