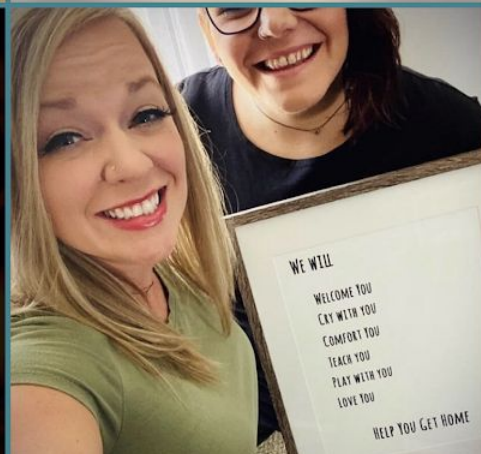
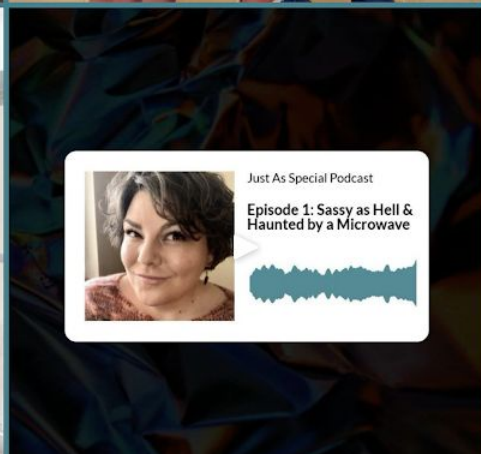




"Listening to your podcast for the first time - oh my gosh! I feel like I have been wishing for something like this for so long.

— @kelseeanne





**Just As Special
X
University of
California, Berkeley**

**Data Science
Discovery Project
Spring 2023**



Goals of Just As Special

Give kids in care a better tomorrow by:

- Supporting foster and adoptive families and volunteers in new ways
- Recruiting diverse foster and adoptive families and volunteers
- Mobilizing communities across the state to address the foster care crisis

**EVERY FAMILY
HAS ITS OWN
CULTURE.**

JustAsSpecial.com



Our work was accomplished with the generous support of our sponsor and partner, Cobbled Streets.

Cobbled Streets is 501 (c)(3) that focuses on providing experiences and opportunities for foster children while promoting healthy relationships with adults.

These opportunities take many forms, such as art, sports, equine therapy, and many others, providing transformative experiences for kids in foster care.

We thank Cobbled Streets for supporting Just As Special in our goal to give kids in care a better tomorrow.

Find out more about Cobbled Streets' innovative approach on their website:

www.cobbledstreets.org/programs





How We Help

- 1. Resource Database:** Allows foster families to more easily access the supports needed to thrive and streamlines the process for volunteers and donors to get involved.
- 2. Podcast:** Amplifies diverse perspectives of foster care and adoption through personal interviews with former youth in care, non-traditional foster and adoptive families, and foster care professionals.
- 3. Online Training:** Provides highly relevant training for foster and adoptive parents focused on diversity and applied learning in partnership with agencies.





Foster Care in Colorado



Kids In Care

1,243,456 youth in the state in 2021 with 4,247 youth in foster care; 2.8% foster care entry rate ([source](#)).



Where Do Kids Go

47% of foster care placements end with reunification with family of origin; 26% of placements will be adopted into a new home ([source](#)). That being said, this quantitative data doesn't follow the qualitative data our project has gathered. Based on the stories we have gathered, reunification stories may be overreported.



Time Span for a New Home

Each year in the U.S., more than 25,000 kids age out of foster care without any family to call home ([source](#)).



Stats & Figures

As far as we know, Just As Special is the first and only informational resource database for the foster care community both within the state of Colorado and nationally.

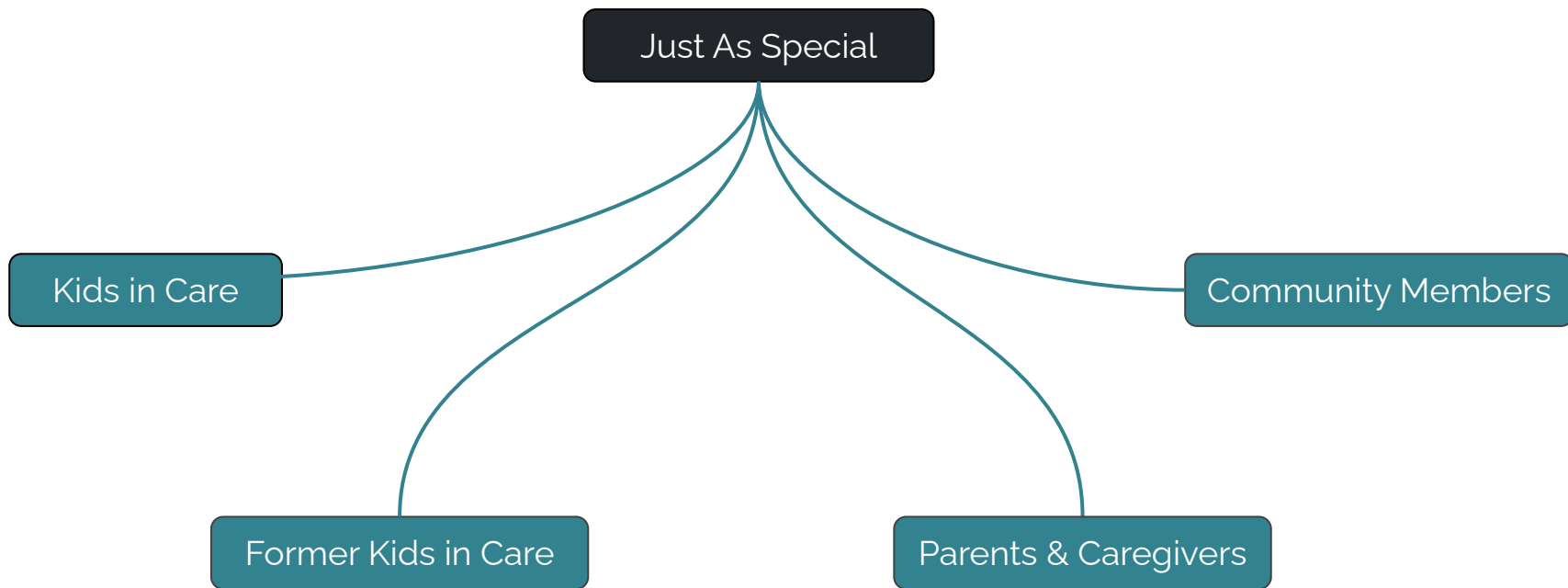
At the time of writing (April 2023) the database currently has:

354 resources
5 main categories
27 subcategories

All of these serve different cohorts of the foster care community: **kids in care, former kids in care, parents & caregivers, and other community members.**

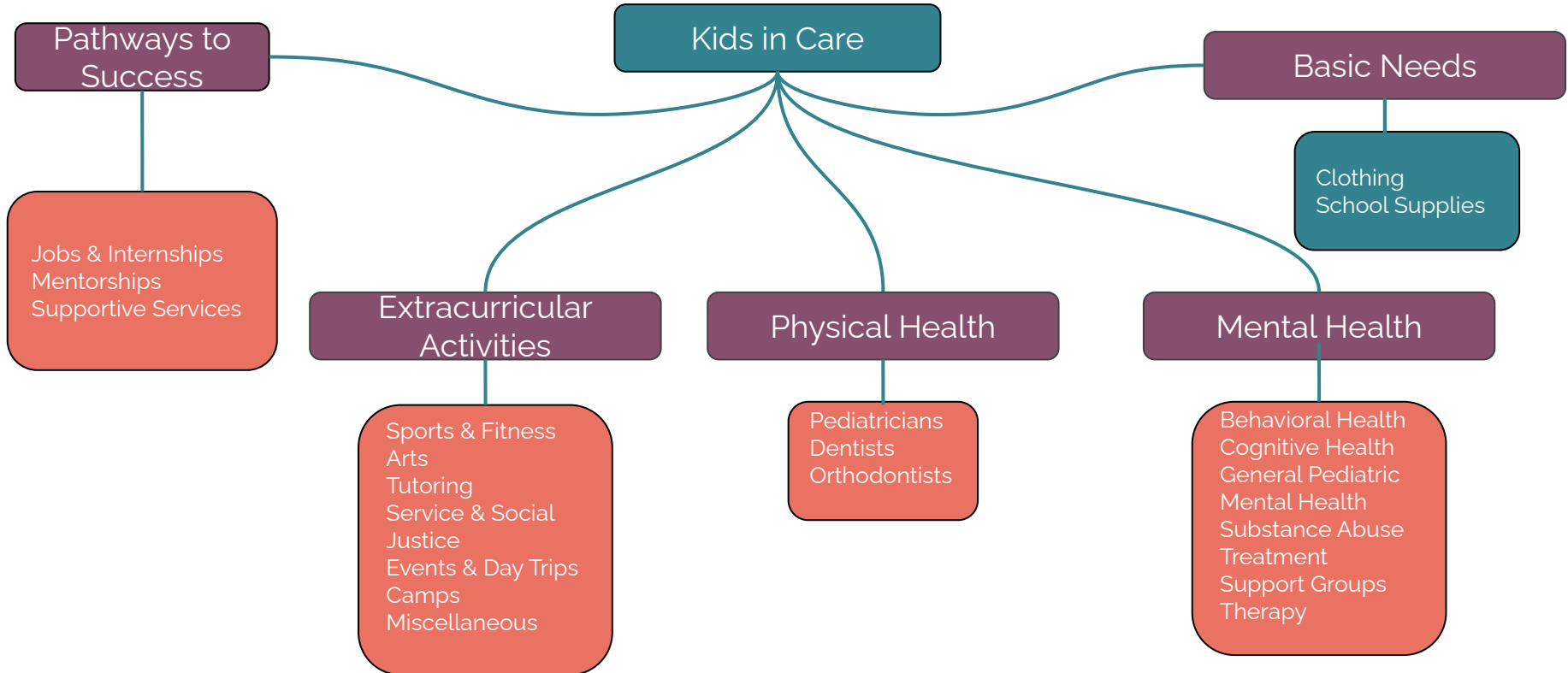


How is the database structured?

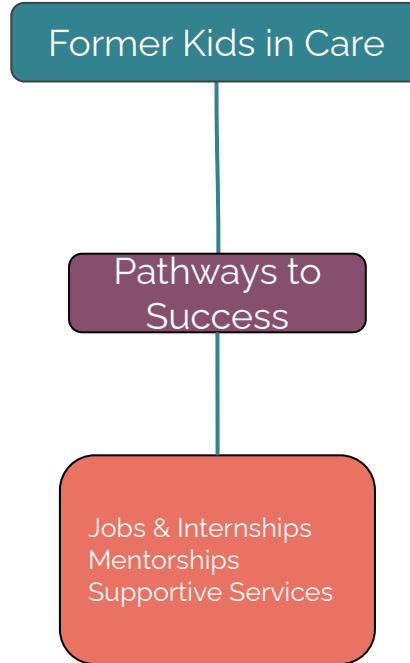




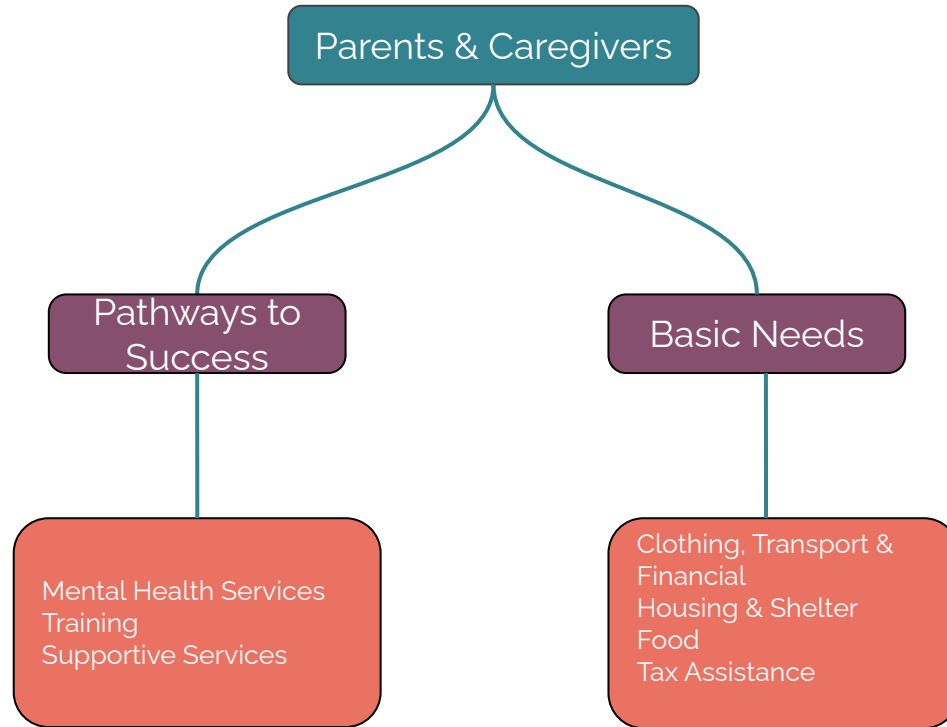
How is the database structured?



How is the database structured?



How is the database structured?



How is the database structured?





Why the Data Science Discovery Program?



Goals of Our Involvement

Why did Just As Spécial get involved with the Data Science Discovery Program?

- To underscore the importance of our project and leverage its collected data in an academic context
- To share the project's work in other spheres, such as the “Data Science for Social Good” space, where it can serve as inspiration for other projects

**DON'T GIVE UP
UNLESS
ABSOLUTELY
NECESSARY.**

- ERICA, 12-YEARS OLD & FORMER KID IN FOSTER CARE

JustAsSpécial.com



The Data Science Discovery Teams



Text

Public Transport
&
Socioeconomic
Analysis



Audio

Experimentation
Groups



Storytelling

Telling the
Project's Data Story



Text: Transportation



Cleaning the Data

- We started with the Just As Special database spreadsheet that included descriptions of the 300+ sites uploaded to justasspecial.com. This data was formatted to be visualized through MapMe, so the information was clustered together within columns.
- We separated the description section into these categories:

- Description of Service
- Service Area
- Service Type
- Phone Number
- Email
- Website URL
- Donation URL
- Volunteer URL
- Referral Lists

Cleaned Spreadsheet:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	
1	mapmeid	name	description of service	service area	service type	phone number	email	website url	donation url	volunteer url	referral lists	categories
2	090cb20-9b12-	All-Star Internsh	Online and in-person p	Nationwide	Online and in-pe	(503) 717-1552	N/A	https://www.fosts	N/A	N/A	N/A	Jobs & Internships,Colorado
3	7860368f-11ac-	Career Boost	Provides credentials in	Statewide	In-person	(719) 502-2404	N/A	https://www.care	N/A	N/A	N/A	Jobs & Internships,Colorado
4	3f5d8295-0a01+	Goodwill of Colo	Provides job training ar	Local	In-person	(719) 635-4483	N/A	https://goodwillco	https://goodwillco	https://goodwillco		Jobs & Internships,Donation Opportunities,Vo
5	8a401e9b-9449-	Goodwill of Colo	Provides job training ar	Local	In-person	(303) 830-7700	N/A	https://goodwillco	https://goodwillco	https://goodwillco		Jobs & Internships,Donation Opportunities,Vo
6	48622361-72d9-	Peak Peak Worl	Provides job search he	Local	In-person and or	(719) 667-3700	N/A	https://ppwrk.org	N/A	N/A		Jobs & Internships,Colorado
7	31f12d78-3cb4-	Spark Mindset	Provides online appren	Nationwide	Online	(720) 507-8988	info@sparkmind	https://www.sparkmindset.com/m	https://www.spar			Jobs & Internships,Miscellaneous,Donation O
8	33897101-3de4-	Think Of Us	Research and advocac	Nationwide	Online	N/A	N/A	https://www.think	https://donorbox	N/A	N/A	Jobs & Internships,Supportive Services & Sch
9	2080e12f-6a27-	Denver Chafee F	A wealth of information	Local	Online and in-pe	(720) 944-6327	denverILchafee	https://denverchf	N/A	https://denverchf		Jobs & Internships,Supportive Services & Sch
10	997e9174-e92b-	Mile High United	An agency with the goe	Local	In-person	(303) 433-8383	info@unitedway	unitedwaydenve	https://unitedway	https://unitedway		Jobs & Internships,Supportive Services & Sch
11	aa4cd9d9-97a5-	Women's Bean F	An organization that en	Statewide	In-person	(888) 292-3001	N/A	https://www.wor	https://www.wor	https://www.wor		Jobs & Internships,Supportive Services & Sch
12	6358f6e-15da-	Bayaud Enterpri	An organization that se	Local	In-person	(303) 830-6885	info@bayaudent	https://bayauden	N/A	https://bayauden		Jobs & Internships,Supportive Services & Sch
13	c473c480-cc89-	Rocky Mountain	This organization provi	Local	In-person	1 (800) 748-207-	info@rmsr.org	https://www.rmsr	N/A	https://www.rmsr		Jobs & Internships,Volunteering Opportunities
14	b0fe8061-119a-	Rocky Mountain	This organization provi	Local	In-person	(970) 243-0410	info@rmsr.org	https://www.rmsr	N/A	https://www.rmsr		Jobs & Internships,Volunteering Opportunities
15	4a03493c-ab5a-	Rocky Mountain	This organization provi	Local	In-person	(970) 434-3687	info@rmsr.org	https://www.rmsr	N/A	https://www.rmsr		Jobs & Internships,Volunteering Opportunities
16	acc83aa7-6b30-	Rocky Mountain	This organization provi	Local	In-person	(970) 243-9318	info@rmsr.org	https://www.rmsr	N/A	https://www.rmsr		Jobs & Internships,Volunteering Opportunities
17	8355c9d7-eb2d-	Rocky Mountain	This organization provi	Local	In-person	N/A	info@rmsr.org	https://www.rmsr	N/A	https://www.rmsr		Jobs & Internships,Volunteering Opportunities
18	23d20094-c4cf-	Rocky Mountain	This organization provi	Local	In-person	(719) 542-1922	info@rmsr.org	https://www.rmsr	N/A	https://www.rmsr		Jobs & Internships,Volunteering Opportunities
19	f34c42c3-8a8f-	Rocky Mountain	This organization provi	Local	In-person	N/A	info@rmsr.org	https://www.rmsr	N/A	https://www.rmsr		Jobs & Internships,Volunteering Opportunities
20	9065c94-24d4-	CommunityWork	A Christian agency that	Local	In-person	(720) 363-4048	N/A	https://www.com	https://www.ccc	N/A	N/A	Jobs & Internships,Donation Opportunities,Co
21	cc05638-9482-	Colorado LMI Gi	(A mostly) online agen	Statewide	Online and in-pe	(303) 319-8851	cdle_lmi@state	https://www.cclti	N/A	N/A	N/A	Jobs & Internships,Colorado
22	8a19362-2eb1-	Ability Connect	Provides supportive se	Statewide	Online and in-pe	(303) 691-9339	info@abilityconn	https://www.abili	https://www.intelanl	https://www.abili		Jobs & Internships,Supportive Services & Sch
23	895d5f59-5e15-	Work Options Fc	An agency that provide	Local	In-person	(720) 944-3393	info@workoptio	https://workoptio	https://www.orm	https://workoptio		Jobs & Internships,Donation Opportunities,Vo
24	cc8bece-1d9c-	Thrive	Thrive is an employeer	Local	Online and in-pe	(303) 604-8065	info@thrivecolor	https://thrivecolor	https://www.cdis	https://thrivecolor		Jobs & Internships,Donation Opportunities,Vo
25	83887e25-8523-	Shiloh House	Provides a wide variety	Local	In-person	(303) 933-1393	info@shilohhou	https://shilohhou	https://shilohhou	https://shilohhou		Jobs & Internships,Donation Opportunities,Vo
26	bcbf0b8-635d-	The Matthews H	An organization that se	Local	In-person	(970) 449-5191	info@thematthe	https://www.them	https://thematthe	https://www.them		Jobs & Internships,Supportive Services & Sch

★ Why is this important?

Cleaning the data transforms it into a format that can be stored and analyzed more easily. It also allows for a smoother transfer of data to another hosting organization.



The Research Question

- We noticed that the data was spread all throughout Colorado.
- One problem that came up was whether those seeking to engage with these resources are able to access them. This is especially true for former kids in care, who are more likely to rely on public transport.
 - What are their options and how close are the stops to the sites?
 - How can former foster care individuals connect with these resources?
- Therefore, we posed the research question:

How accessible are the resources listed in Just As Special's database?



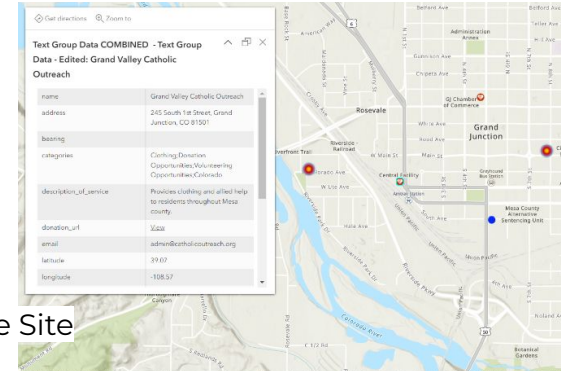
Why is this important?

It ensures our data is actually helpful for our target audience.

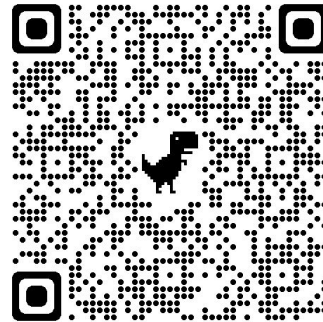


Our Findings: The Overall Map

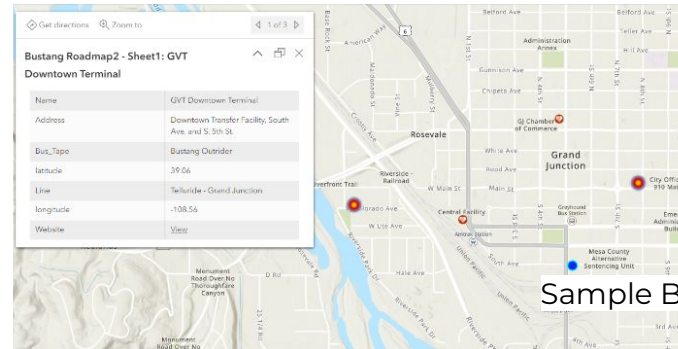
- We conducted this study by overlapping multiple transportation datasets and JAS sites to visualize the relationship of the datasets.
- Routes included:
 - Regional Transportation District (RTD) - Denver-Aurora-Boulder
 - Transfort - Fort Collins
 - Bustang - interregional and intercity bus services



Sample Site



To interact with our map, scan this QR code!



Sample Bus Stop



Our Findings: Denver

- Many of the sites were clustered around the Denver Area
- There are lots of public transportation routes, specifically the **Regional Transportation District** (RTD), around the surrounding area that make the resources very accessible to the foster care community

Key:

JAS Site



RTD Resources

Facilities



LightrailStations



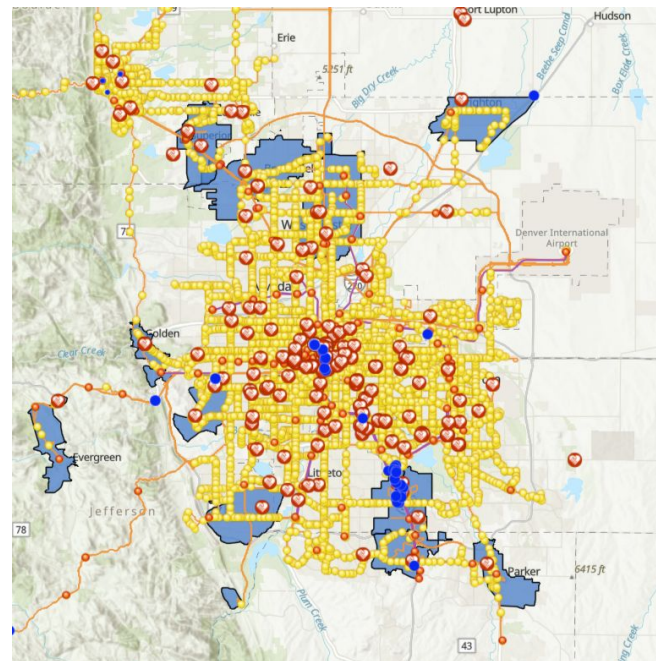
BusStops Active



LightrailLines Offset



BusRoutes



★ Why is this important?

This finding underscores that resources in metropolitan areas served by strong public transport systems are, in general, accessible to the foster care community.



Our Findings: Rest of Colorado

- We layered the public transportation routes by including active bus stops from:
 - **Transfort** (Fort Collins)
 - **Bustang Routes** (interregional and intercity bus services)
- After analyzing the map, we noticed that there are many public transport routes accessible to the majority of the listed resource sites.

Key:

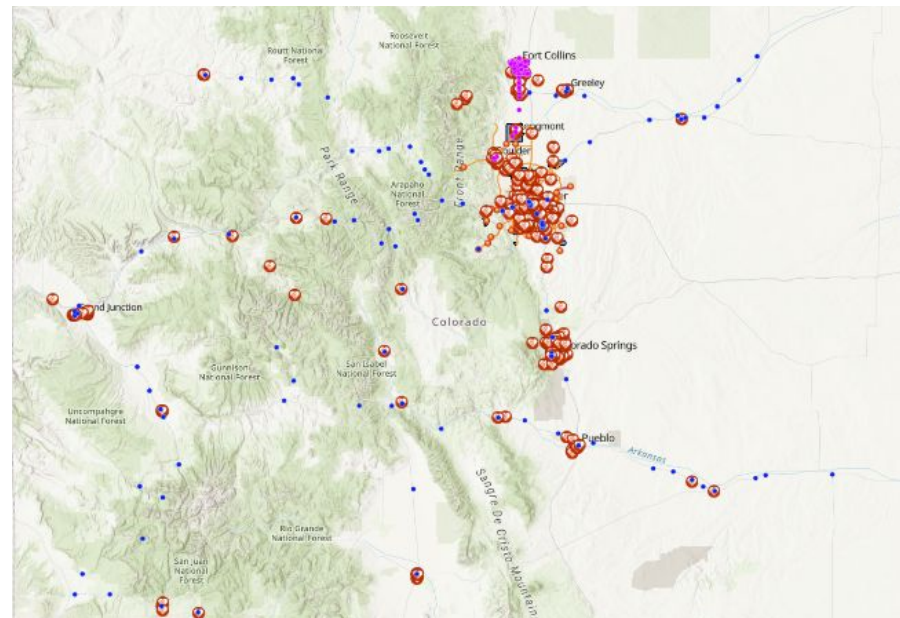
JAS Site



Bustang



Transfort



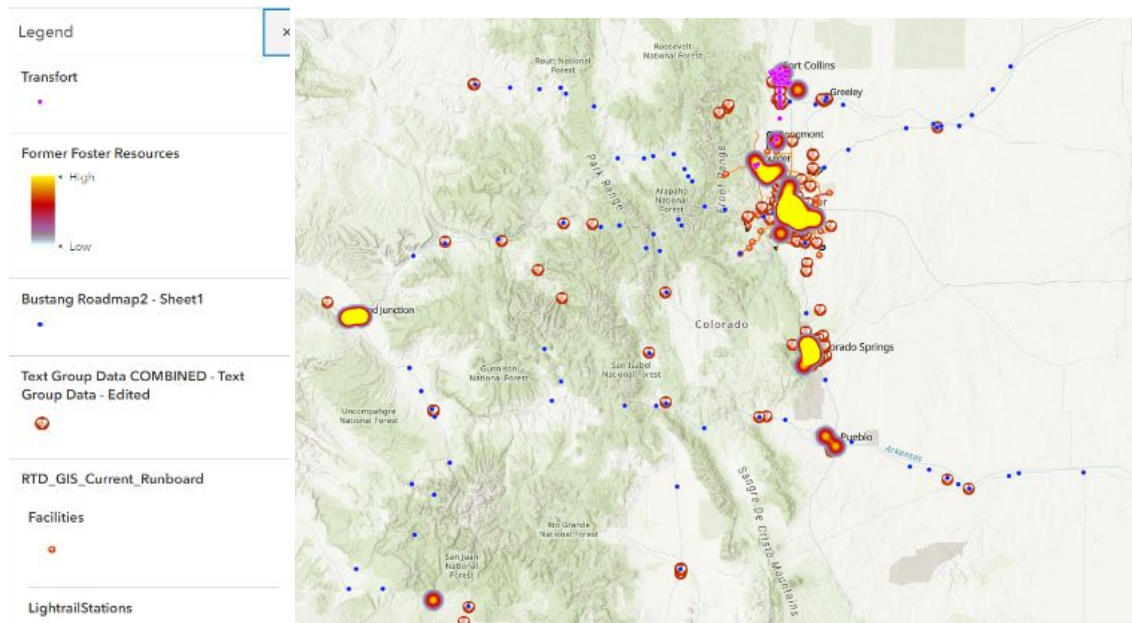
★ Why is this important?

Our analysis shows that, even beyond the major metropolitan area of Denver, many resource sites remain accessible by public transportation.

Our Findings: Foster Care Resources for Former Kids in Care



- We realize that these resources are especially crucial to former kids in care looking for:
 - Jobs & Internships
 - Supportive Services
- The temperature data points on our map highlight these sites and show that former foster care resources are mainly found within the **Denver, Colorado Springs, and Grand Junction** areas.
- Resources for former kids in care are all mainly located nearby at least one public transportation stop.



★ Why is this important?

Our analysis shows that resources for former kids in care are concentrated in metropolitan areas, close to public transport. Fewer resources for this population group are found outside of urban areas, however.



Citations

The information included in this portion of the analysis were extracted from the following sites:

- Just As Special Data: <https://www.justasspecial.com/resources>
- RTD: <https://gis-rtd-denver.opendata.arcgis.com/>
- Transfort: <http://www.ridetransfort.com/routes/routes>
- RideBustang: https://ridebustang.com/outrider/routes-maps/#telluride_grand_junction

Our final map:

<https://cal.maps.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?webmap=f277eofd73024e0c93b6bf87a024724b>

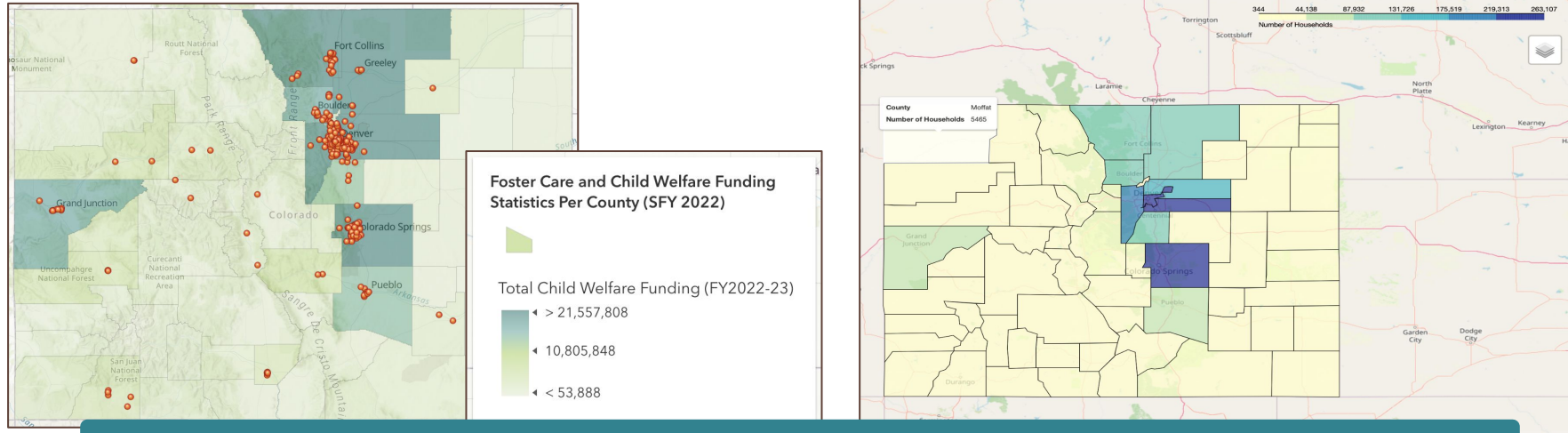


**Text:
Socio-Economic**



Research Question: Socioeconomic Data

- What is the relationship between socioeconomic and demographic factors and the number of resources listed in the JAS database per county?



★ Why is this important?

We wanted to know whether there was any correlation between these factors and the number of listed resources per county to ensure foster care communities are being properly served.

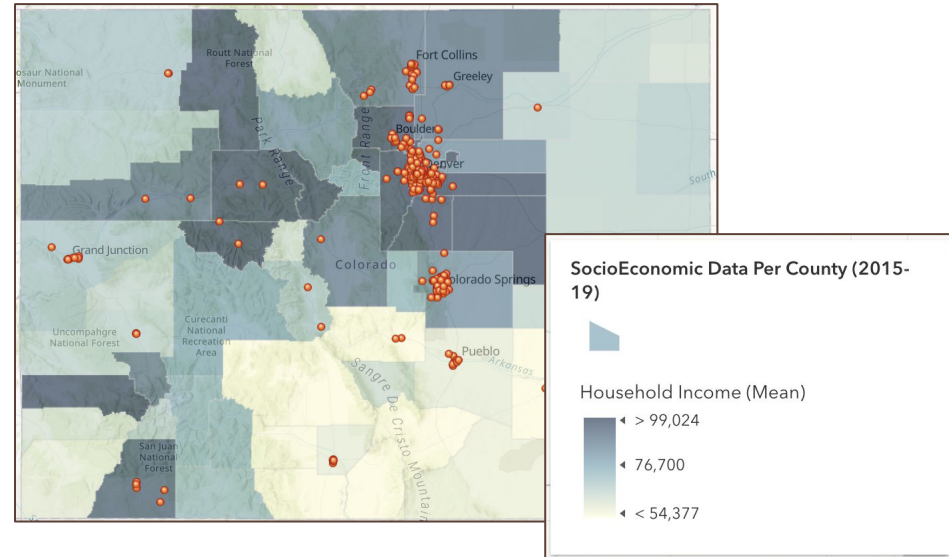


Our Findings: The Overall Map

- We conducted this study using a combination of ArcGIS and GeoPandas.
- Maps were created by overlaying various socioeconomic and demographic data with the Just As Special resources **per county**.
- Features examined in the map include:
 - Average Household Income
 - Population
 - Child Welfare Funding
 - Foster Care Populations

To view the interactive map and graphs:

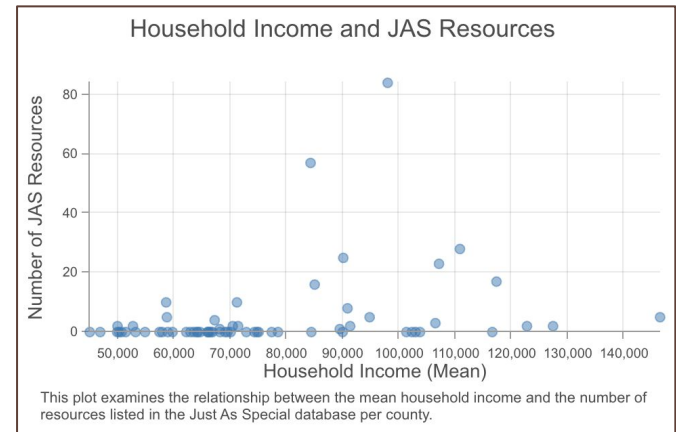
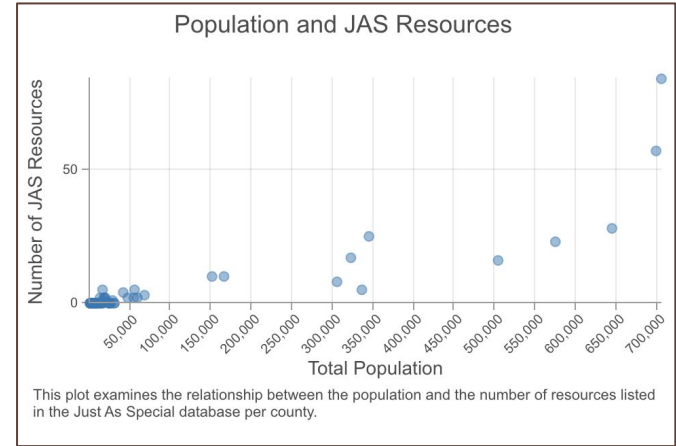
<https://cal.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/charts/index.html?appid=02f8e8959a1c4b22a557e698ac5ca172&locale=en-us>



Findings: Socioeconomic Data



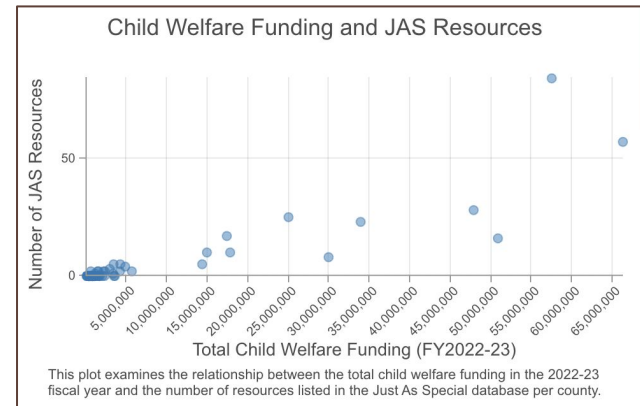
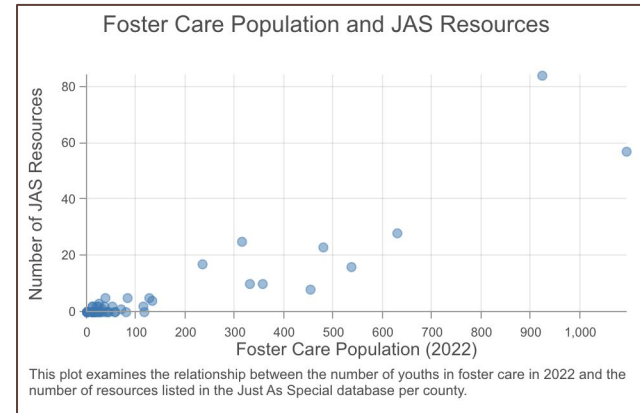
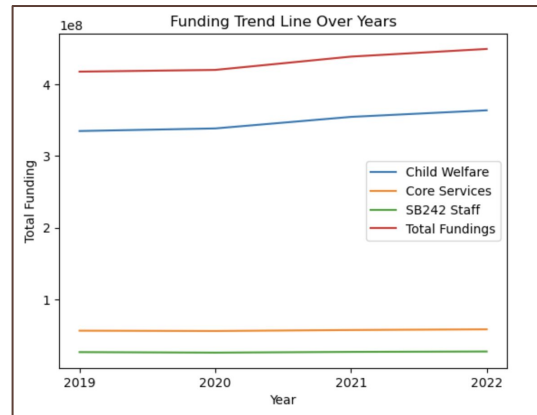
- The number of resources listed in the JAS database in a given county seems to have a positive correlation with population.
- Graphing the average household income for the county and the number of resources yields a bell-like distribution.





Findings: Foster Care Data

- There seems to be a positive correlation between the number of resources listed and the foster care population (in the 2022 FY) per county.
- There seems to be a positive correlation between the number of resources listed and child welfare funding (in the 2022 FY) per county.



Why is this important?

Counties with a greater foster care population would, in general, require more resources.



Citations

The information included in this this portion of the analysis were extracted from the following cites:

- Just As Special Data: <https://www.justasspecial.com/resources>
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment Open Data: <https://data-cdphe.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/CDPHE::income-poverty-census-tracts/explore?location=38.916323%2C-105.298868%2C8.36>
- Foster Care and Child Welfare Funding data provided by the Colorado Department of Human Services

Our Final Map:

<https://cal.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/charts/index.html?appid=02f8e8959a1c4b22a557e698ac5ca172&locale=en-us>



Audio



Audio: The Process

Team Overview: Clean, transform, and analyze the resource dataset of audio recordings and their transcripts

1. Podcast Episode Data
2. Podcast Transcripts
3. DOCX to JSON File Conversion
4. Experimentation with Natural Language Processing
5. Sentiment Analysis



Podcast Episode Data

- Recorded and organized qualitative/quantitative data from podcast episodes
- Assigned each episode into designated categories, subcategories, and filters

Episode title	Amount of Speakers	Speaker Name(s)	Where the Speakers are From	Episode description
Year in Review: Good intentions don't guarantee good impact	2	Natasha Pepperl, Rachel Pepperl	Denver, Colorado	Join foster mom, Natasha and foster care volunteer, Rachel as they reflect on lessons learned in 2021 to carry into the new year.
Moving Beyond the Mic: Behind the Scenes of Just As Special Podcast	5	Natasha Pepperl, Rebecca Mendoza Nunziata, Jeanette Harris Courts	Denver, Colorado	Instead of interviewing someone else, Just As Special host Natasha is actually in the hot seat this time thanks to House of Pod's From the Margins to the Center podcast. They generously gave us permission to run this interview on our show and we hope you enjoy going behind the scenes of the Just As Special podcast! Natasha also talks about how Just As Special moves beyond the microphone to build resources and community for foster families. Learn more at JustAsSpecial.com .
Fostering Creatively: A 100 lb Bike Ride & YouTube Star	3	Natasha Pepperl, Rachel Pepperl, Nichole Barnett		Nichole shares what she enjoys about being a single foster mom and how she creatively tackles foster care challenges. See photos and an update about Nichole and the kids in her care at JustAsSpecial.com .

★ Why is this important?

Categorizing the podcast episodes allows us an overview of which topics are discussed by the podcast. This provides important metadata for future analysis.



Podcast Transcripts

- Used Artificial Intelligence to generate transcripts of every podcast recording
- Cleaned and proofread transcripts

YearinReview_edited.mp3

Natasha Pepperl [00:00:01] Welcome to Just As Special: the place to learn more about foster care from diverse perspectives. I'm Natasha, a foster mom.

Rachel Pepperl [00:00:08] And I'm Rachel, a mentor to kids in care.

Natasha Pepperl [00:00:11] So we thought it'd be a good idea to start this year out by taking a reflection and sharing with you all what we learned from last year. 2021 was a big year for us, as it was for many of you. And yeah, we just thought it'd be really valuable to kind of share some of the stuff we've learned.

Rachel Pepperl [00:00:30] Yeah, you know, 2021, we're still kind of struggling through that pandemic, so it's a little bit slower lifestyle for us all, so taking that time to reflect as we go into this next year, I think is especially important. So Natasha, what is one of the key lessons that you learned last year?

Natasha Pepperl [00:00:51] Yeah, one that really hit home for me in some really big ways was that good intentions does not mean good impact. And I don't know, I just feel this is so important to share because I feel like especially as a foster parent or even as, you know, a foster care volunteer, it's so important to be open to growing and evolving because you can really have the best of intentions and still cause harm to a child. So I personally experienced this in my home with a kid in my care that I had really great intentions with. But looking back, there's ways I could have done things that would have been better for everybody. And so that was something that I really had to learn and work through. But also what I learned to is kind of on the flip side of this is that, you know, I think kids in care are often really advanced in their ability to pick up on the intentions of others, you know, as a survival instinct for sure that they've really honed a lot of them. And so what was really cool for me to see, too, is even though, you know, sometimes I was, you know, trying my best, but falling short is that often times, you know, these kids, when they know that you're trying to be really respectful of them and trying to care for them, they'll have a lot of grace for you when you do make these mistakes a lot of the time. So that was really cool for me to see that.

Rachel Pepperl [00:02:15] Yeah, I think that's a great point. I know that you can't really go into specifics about your placements, but do you have any specific examples of where you had a good intention? But that didn't really necessarily come out in the end product?

Natasha Pepperl [00:02:30] Yeah, well I can high level share a little bit about that and I know we've mentioned on the podcast before that we did have a placement that ended up disrupting. And so I think that was a perfect example of how good intentions really don't always mean good impact because of course it's never a positive for a placement does disrupt for a child in terms of, you know, then they're having to move to another home, you know, and even if the home they moved to next is a better situation. You know, there's still that harm that's created. Every time a child has to move homes, it makes it harder for them to create relationships. It makes it harder for them to concentrate on school. And studies show it does create some of the same brain patterns as a trauma, like it is a trauma for a child to have to move at home no matter the situation. So that was a really big learning experience for me, and I think that ties into a lot of the other lessons I learned as well. You know, another lesson I learned through that is a good fit is often overlooked, I think, in foster care, but really can make all the difference. And what I mean by that is sometimes like your home or your lifestyle isn't going to be a healthy place for a child, you know, no

★ Why is this important?

Having podcast transcripts on the project's website makes it more easily findable through internet search engines. This directs more traffic to the website and the project's resources as a whole, including the database.



File Conversions

```
import docx
import json

# Load the Docx file
doc = docx.Document('YearinReview_edited.docx')

# Iterate over the paragraphs and create a list of dictionaries
data = []
for para in doc.paragraphs:
    para_data = {}
    para_data['text'] = para.text
    para_data['style'] = para.style.name
    data.append(para_data)

# Convert the list of dictionaries to JSON
json_data = json.dumps(data)

# Save the JSON data to a file
with open('YearinReview_edited.docx', 'w') as f:
    f.write(json_data)
```

- Used Python to convert DOCX transcripts to JSON files in preparation for sentiment analysis

★ Why is this important?

Transforming the files into a format other than DOCX allows them to be more easily read by machines.

File Conversions



YearinReview_edited.docx

File Edit View Insert Format Tools Help

Normal text Arial 12 B I U A

YearinReview_edited.mp3

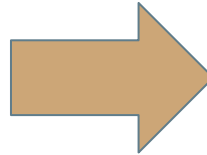
Natasha Pepperl [00:00:01] Welcome to Just As Special: the place to learn more about foster care from diverse perspectives. I'm Natasha, a foster mom.

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Natasha Pepperl [00:00:11] So we thought it'd be a good idea to start this year out by taking a reflection and sharing with you all what we learned from last year. 2021 was a big year for us, as it was for many of you. And yeah, we just thought it'd be really valuable to kind of share some of the stuff we've learned.

Rachel Pepperl [00:00:30] Yeah, you know, 2021, we're still kind of struggling through that pandemic, so it's a little bit slower lifestyle for us all, so taking that time to reflect as we go into this next year, I think is especially important. So Natasha, what is one of the key lessons that you learned last year?

Natasha Pepperl [00:00:51] Yeah, one that really hit home for me in some really big ways was that good intentions does not mean good impact. And I don't know, I just feel this is so important to share because I feel like especially as a foster parent or even as, you know, as a foster care volunteer, it's so important to be open to growing and evolving because you can really have the best of intentions and still cause harm to a child. So I personally experienced this in my home with a kid in my care that I had really great intentions with. But looking back, there's ways I could have done things that would have been better for everybody. And so that was something that I really had to learn and work through. But also what I learned to is kind of on the flip side of this is that, you know, I think kids in care are often really advanced in their ability to pick up on the intentions of others, you know, as a survival instinct for sure that they've really honed a lot of them. And so what was really cool for me to see, too, is even though, you know, sometimes I was, you know, trying my best, but falling short is that often times, you know, these kids, when they know that you're

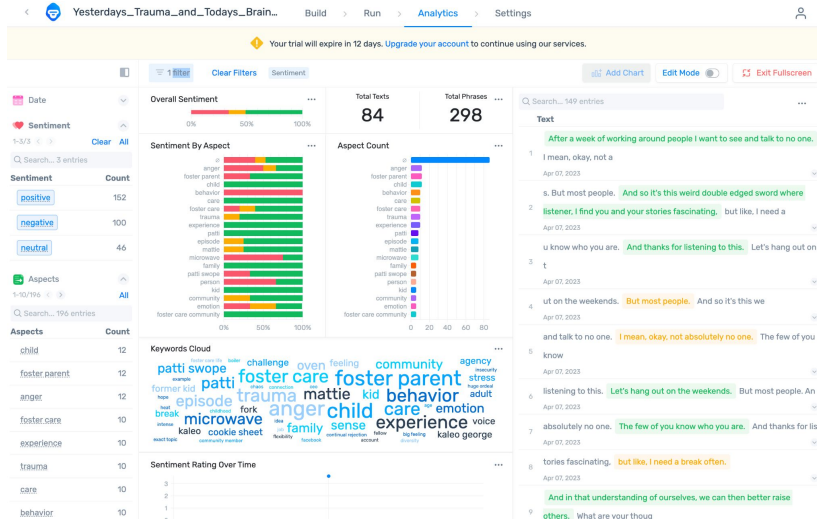


JAS_YearinReview.json

```
Users > katelynjo > Desktop > JAS json files > JAS_YearinReview.json
1 [{"text": "YearinReview_edited.mp3", "style": "normal"}, {"text": "", "style": "normal"}, {"text": "M As Special: the place to learn more about foster care from diverse perspectives. I'm Natasha, a foste "style": "normal"}, {"text": "Rachel Pepperl [00:00:08] And I'm Rachel, a mentor to kids in care. ", "normal"}, {"text": "Natasha Pepperl [00:00:11] So we thought it'd be a good idea to start this year you all what we learned from last year. 2021 was a big year for us, as it was for many of you. And ye to kind of share some of the stuff we've learned. ", "style": "normal"}, {"text": "", "style": "norma Yeah, you know, 2021, we're still kind of struggling through that pandemic, so it's a little bit slow time to reflect as we go into this next year, I think is especially important. So Natasha, what is one of year? ", "style": "normal"}, {"text": "Rachel Pepperl [00:00:30] Yeah, you know, 2021, we're still kind of struggling through that pandemic, so it's a little bit slow time to reflect as we go into this next year, I think is especially important. So Natasha, what is one of the key lessons that you learned last year?"}], [{"text": "Natasha Pepperl [00:00:51] Yeah, one that really hit home for me in some really big ways was that good intentions does not mean good impact. And I don't know, I just feel this is so important to share because I feel like especially as a foster parent or even as, you know, as a foster care volunteer, it's so important to be open to growing and evolving because you can really have the best of intentions and still cause harm to a child. So I personally experienced this in my home with a kid in my care that I had really great intentions with. But looking back, there's ways I could have done things that would have been better for everybody. And so that was something that I really had to learn and work through. But also what I learned to is kind of on the flip side of this is that, you know, I think kids in care are often really advanced in their ability to pick up on the intentions of others, you know, as a survival instinct for sure that they've really honed a lot of them. And so what was really cool for me to see, too, is even though, you know, sometimes I was, you know, trying my best, but falling short is that often times, you know, these kids, when they know that you're"}]
```



NLP Experimenting



Sentences 1-3:
Sentiment: Neutral
In the first three sentences, the introduction is made, and thanks are given to the sponsors who made this podcast possible. There is no subjective language or sentiment expressed.

Sentences 4-6:
Sentiment: Neutral
In these sentences, the host introduces herself and the topic of the mini-series. There is no subjective language or sentiment expressed.

Sentences 7-9:
Sentiment: Neutral
The host acknowledges that the topic of mental health is weighty and that everyone's story is different. There is no subjective language or sentiment expressed.

Sentences 10-12:
Sentiment: Neutral
The host shares a personal anecdote about being an introvert and how it affects her mental health. There is no subjective language or sentiment expressed.

Sentences 13-15:
Sentiment: Neutral
The host acknowledges that some people's experiences, but the main point is that mental health can affect our interactions with ourselves and others. There is no subjective language or sentiment expressed.

Send a message...

- We experimented with Natural Language Processing (NLP) methods and in-browser analytics tools to explore sentiment analysis
 - MonkeyLearn, ChatGPT



Challenges Faced During Our Experiments

- Analysis contained several confusing parts where it still inputted irrelevant words (ex. names) that then outputted a certain type of emotion
- Needed to find a better way to effectively split the document text into smaller sections for more detailed analysis
- Large text incorporated many neutral words that skew sentiment analysis
- Was difficult to split up large text from each transcripts to be fed into a working machine learning model

★ Why is this important?

This experimentation helped us learn what is possible, and what is not possible, with the podcast datasets. This is valuable information for future research using all our datasets, including the resource database.



Sentiment Analysis

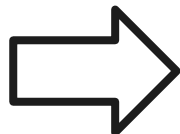
Json	CSV	Text
	0	text_style
	0	Yesterdays_Trauma_and_Todays_Brain_Final.mp3
	0	0
0.25	0.25	Introduction [00:00:00] This episode was made possible with generous support from Cobble Streets and the Colorado Association, a family and children's agencies. Learn more at justasspecial.co
	0	0
0.4452380952	0.4452380952	ET [00:00:18] Welcome to Just As Special, The place to learn about foster care from diverse perspectives. So, hi, I'm ET, and I'm a fellow at just a special with the Urban Leaders Fellowship. I'm pr
	0	0
0.002222222222	0.002222222222	Today's episode is: past trauma and today's brain. This is a pretty weighty topic. Not going to lie. Mental health struggles are tough regardless of how they manifest in ourselves and those we love.
	0	0
0.065	0.065	Everyone's story is different and how those struggles manifest or affect a person's everyday life. That varies a lot too. Here's an example. Identifying as a type of introvert, I find being around people
	0	0
0.0875	0.0875	After a week of working around people I want to see and talk to no one. I mean, okay, not absolutely no one. The few of you know who you are. And thanks for listening to this. Let's hang out on the
	0	0
0.1459935897	0.1459935897	Especially since I work a job with a lot of interaction with people. If I don't have a break with no people on the weekend, like it's not very pleasant. My brain just kind of melts away, but also short circ
	0	0
0.02	0.02	Like when you burn yourself and it's so hot, it feels cold for a bit, but then it's really hot and zingy. That, the human brain. I can still function if I push myself, but I crash eventually and then sleep for
	0	0
0.0791666667	0.0791666667	The main point is our mental health can affect our interactions with ourselves and with others in our communities, our professions, and in our families. First, let's hear from Diamond Kobilinsky, fou
	0	0
0.2066666667	0.2066666667	He's also a self-described gay foster youth who states that growing up as a gay kid in foster care made his life extra intense. Diamond describes how coming out affected his emotional state.
	0	0
-0.01	-0.01	Diamond Kobilinsky [00:02:52] Coming out was a really captivating experience for me and it really released anger. And even to this day, anger's not necessarily a feeling that I have. I definitely get
	0	0
0.1111111111	0.1111111111	That was really something that when those foster families did have that reaction, it was more that it just broke me down because there was just that continual rejection and rejection and rejection fo
	0	0

- Used Python and the Textblob library on JSON and CSV versions of our transcripts to compare and contrast the accuracy of sentiment analysis between both file types
 - Results were the same with JSON and CSV versions of our transcript files



Conclusion

Foster care parents and children undergo significant emotional fluctuations throughout the foster care journey, which can be positively or negatively influenced by external factors.



Next Step for Future Researchers

Finish conducting sentiment on all podcast transcripts to learn and research answers on how different aspects of the foster care system affect the emotions of parents and their kids in care.

★ Why is this important?

This allows us to analyze, on a large scale, the sentiments attached to the experience of being a member of the foster care community. This bird's eye view of the experience could illuminate new insights and underscore areas where service provision is lacking.



**How Do We Tell
The Story of
This Data?**



Our Whitepaper Draft

The Storytelling group was tasked with telling the story of Just As Special's collected data. We have crafted a whitepaper that brings together Just As Special's background, as well as the findings of the text and audio groups.

From [Wiki](#), a whitepaper is a report or guide that informs readers concisely about a complex issue and presents the issuing body's philosophy on the matter.

1. Cover
 - a. Just As Special
 - b. Title of the project
 - c. Contributor
2. Introduction
 - a. Company [intro](#) & About Us
3. Our Goals & Why Just As Special
 - a. What challenges did we face as a group and with the data
4. How We Help
 - a. Categories and subcategories
 - i. Why these categories?
 - ii. How are they used?
 - iii. Descriptions of categories
 1. Kids in Care
 - a. Basic Needs
 - b. Pathways to Success
 - c. Extracurricular Activities
 - d. Physical Health
 - e. Mental Health
 2. Former Kids in Care
 - a. Pathways to Success
 3. Parent & Caregivers
 - a. Basic Needs
 - b. Pathways to Success
 4. Community Members
 - a. Get Involved
 - i. Volunteer
 - ii. Donation
 - b. Podcast
 - i. Intro
 - ii. Low-level figures (how many episodes, distribution amongst categories, etc.)
 - iii. Blurb about [example](#) episode
 - iv. Analysis
 - c. Blog
 - i. Intro (what topics were covered by the blog, why)
 1. Low-level figures (how many articles, what topics are covered) Blog data
 - a. # of articles: 15
 - ii. Blurb about example article
 1. This one? Especially since we partnered with an outside author for it: <https://www.justasspecial.com/blog/how-to-show-up>
 - d. Foster Parent Training
 - i. Intro (what is foster parent training, why is online accessibility useful?)
 - e. Resource Database
 - i. Intro
 - ii. Low-level figures
 - iii. Analysis (geographical distribution and accessibility)
 - iv.
 5. Conclusion
 - a. Summarize everything we talked about
 - i. Who, what, when, where, why, how
 1. Using a chart
 - b. What challenges did we overcome?
 6. Ending Page
 - a. "Learn more at Just As Special"
 - b. Future of the project
 7. Around 300 visitors per year
 8. Topics range from: [how tos](#), deep dives into topics, resource highlights
 9. Most popular articles in 2022:
 - i. <https://www.justasspecial.com/blog/first-steps>
 - ii. <https://www.justasspecial.com/blog/bond>
 - iii. <https://www.justasspecial.com/blog/how-to-show-up>



Why is this important?

This format allows us to communicate our findings to a wider audience.



Whitepaper Showcase

JUST AS SPECIAL WHITE PAPER

How We Have Helped

Overview

Just As Special partners with other organizations to come up with resources that can both benefit foster children and their parents. The resources are divided into 4 main categories and many subcategories. The four main categories include Kids in Care, Former Kids in Care, Parent & Caregivers, and Community Members.

Kids in Care

As the name suggests, Kids in Care provides resources for current foster children. There are career resources, academic support, and physical and mental health support. Former kids refer to children who were in foster before and are now transitioning out of care. In the database, children can find job & internship opportunities around them.

Parent & Caregivers

We also understand the challenge that fosters parents are facing while taking the responsibility of taking care of a child. Therefore, we take action to help reduce the stress and make it easier for anyone to become foster parents. We partner with 2-1-1 Colorado to provide food, tax, and financial assistance to parents who need them.

Community Members

Last but not least, we admire and appreciate our community members. Anyone can help in their way. Therefore, we provide three ways that you can help, which are volunteering, donating, and growing the database.

Supporting Resources

Podcasts

- Just As Special provides 25 podcast episodes to support foster children as well as their caregivers. The podcasts feature a diverse range of speakers, including foster moms, education workers, and children welfare advocates who share their experiences and insights. The episodes are divided into two main categories: Pathway to Success and Mental Health.
- The Pathway to Success category includes 15 episodes that offer practical guidance and advice to foster parents and caregivers. The Mental Health category focuses on addressing the emotional and psychological well-being of foster children and includes four episodes.
- The podcasts are further divided into four categories: Supportive Services, Training, Behavioral Health, and General Pediatric Mental Health. These categories cover a range of themes such as trauma-informed care, school readiness, and navigating the foster care system.

Foster Parent Training

- Foster Parent Training is one of the three of how Just As Special can help. We have seen hundreds of thousands of cases where foster parent burnout and placement disruption occur. This is why we provide Foster & Adoptive Parent Training. In our training, we focus on helping parents practically apply lessons from the diverse perspectives of foster care.
- We are proud of our Foster & Adoptive Parent Training because of its features, affordable price, and convenience. Our Training charges agencies an annual fee of \$3000, but it gives all their families unlimited access to more than 18 hours of audio and visual training. What is more important is the training is completely online, which means parents can learn whenever and wherever they want. The training has proven effective and has a curriculum developed and updated by people with lived experience.

Blogs

- Just As Special provides 25 podcast episodes to support foster children as well as their caregivers. The podcasts feature a diverse range of speakers, including foster moms, education workers, and children welfare advocates who share their experiences and insights.
- The episodes are divided into two main categories: Pathway to Success and Mental Health. The Pathway to Success category includes 15 episodes that offer practical guidance and advice to foster parents and caregivers. The Mental Health category focuses on addressing the emotional and psychological well-being of foster children and includes four episodes.
- The podcasts are further divided into four categories: Supportive Services, Training, Behavioral Health, and General Pediatric Mental Health. These categories cover a range of themes such as trauma-informed care, school readiness, and navigating the foster care system.

Resource Database

- Just As Special's resource database serves to link kids in care with foster parents, resources such as mental and physical health options, employment and internship opportunities. In addition to children in foster care, Just As Special's resource database also connects foster parents to free therapy, and helps different organizations to create partnership within the community.
- The resource database is categorized into different sections according to target audience, and each section consists of maps that labeled the resources accordingly. People can click on each label to read detailed information of the resource, such as specific location, description of the work they've done, and contact information. Using this database, one can easily find the best option that fulfills their need.



What did the text group discover?

Places like Denver and Colorado Springs contain the most resources around them possibly because they have high median family income and a high number of households.

Our analysis shows that resources for former kids in care are concentrated in metropolitan areas, close to public transport. Fewer resources for this population group are found outside of urban areas, however.

Action step: visualizing levels of funding data over time, using time series data, may help to understand the distribution of foster care funding and access to resources over recent years. This could be combined with time series data of political and global events, such as elections and the COVID-19 pandemic, to see if there is any long-term correlation between the two.



What did the audio group discover?

NLP analysis of the podcast transcripts allows us to analyze, on a large scale, the sentiments attached to the experience of being a member of the foster care community.

Action step: this analysis should continue with all the podcast transcripts. This bird's eye view of the experience could illuminate new insights and underscore areas where service provision is lacking.



What did the storytelling group discover?

Communicating our findings to a variety of audiences-- academics, foster care community members, etc. -- is crucial to foster future collaboration. Finding language that is accessible to all audiences is challenging.

Action step: finalize our language, namely vocabulary, choices in our whitepaper and to publicize it. This will allow us to share our project's findings and action steps with multiple relevant audiences, fostering greater awareness of the importance of Just As Special's data and work.



What happens now?

- Publicize our findings to a wider audience through the whitepaper and this presentation
- Safeguard the project's data for both community and academic use, as well as inspiration for future projects

**DON'T GIVE UP
UNLESS
ABSOLUTELY
NECESSARY.**

- ERICA, 12-YEARS OLD & FORMER KID IN FOSTER CARE

JustAsSpecial.com



THANK YOU!





Thank you!

Just As Special would like to thank Cobbled Streets for their generous support of this project.

“This database is a significant step towards the improvement of our state as a whole,” says Shari Shink, Founder and Executive Director of Cobbled Streets. **“It has not only provides youth in care and their foster parents with an abundance of trustworthy options to choose from, but has also succeeded in providing a safe space for those who often need the most help – youth who have aged out of the foster care system.”**

Please visit www.cobbledstreets.org to find out more about their valuable work serving the foster care community in Colorado.





Thank you to our participants!

- Brie Zhou
- Deheng Peng
- Fanyi Lyu
- Irene Widiaman
- Madeeha Khan
- WingYeung Ma
- Sophia Zheng
- Abbie Tsai
- Cindy Zhang
- Evie Currington
- Katelyn Jo
- Richard Zhuang
- Ryan Chen



Just As Special team members:

Emmy Tither (Emmy@JustAsSpecial) and Natasha Pepperl

Thank you to the University of California, Berkeley's [Data Science Discovery Program](#) for having Just As Special on board as a partnering organization for their Spring 2023 cohort!