**Interviewer: Yuchen Zhao**

**Interviewee: Rona Wolfe**

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**List of Acronyms: R: Rona, IN: Interviewer**

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[Begin Transcript 00:00:00]

IN: OK, thanks. So could you tell us your name first?

R: Sure. My name is Rona Wolfe.

IN: Anything you want to say about yourself?

R: My position at the Children's Center is I am the assistant director of the kindergarten and school- age program, and I am also the center-wide social justice educator.

IN: Thanks. So today we're going to talk about a little bit of your opinions on the voting system. Yeah. So first, if you think of the voting system in the US, imagine there's a scale in front of you like from zero that will be distrust. And then from 10 that will be trust. So which number would you put?

R: Yeah, I think that's an interesting question. I'm not the biggest grader. I don't necessarily believe in that for children or for things like this. It's interesting because I think that how you feel about voting probably has a lot to do with your experience and who you are in this society. So for me, as a white woman, I would say that I am pretty trustworthy of the vote, but I also understand that I don't speak for everybody in the population and there are good reasons why other people would not be as trustworthy.

IN: So is there any like personal stories or your experience, that's why you choose to trust it?

R: Sure. I think that I grew up in a very activist household where it was taught to me young that this is a form of activism. This is a form of participating, and I saw my parents vote, and so I feel like it was sort of ingrained in me that this is a responsibility that we have, and we take these opportunities to make choices and this is one way to make your voice heard. And so that probably guides my experience. I think, again, growing up with the privilege that I have and living with the privilege that I have right now allows me to be more trustworthy just from my experiences. But I think that information that gets out in the media and is told by different people who are presented as experts or and somehow knowledgeable about this harms the idea of trust, and that's a hard thing to fight against. Because that's sort of everywhere media and social media and who we look at as the people who speak for us. And that's a hard thing to fight against.

IN: So if you have like chance to like others or where do you think is the ideal position for people or ideal attitude towards to the voting system?

R: Well, ideal would be that everybody understands that this is one way to have their voice heard or to be represented. I think that's ideal. Do I think that we're close to that? I mean, I'd like to think we're working on that. I don't know that we're there now, and I understand why people don't feel that way, and that's ideal for me. I don't know what's ideal for somebody else. That's what I would think, that's my interpretation of it. The more people involved and the more people standing up for what they believe in, that collectively you can make a difference. But I also understand the frustration. And the feeling of not being represented or being misrepresented. The things that we have put in place, like IDs and changing district maps and things like that, don't help. They don't help build trust in this system.

IN: So what do you think are the measures that we can take to improve this trust?

R: Well, if only we had an answer to that, right? I think a lot of things, I think on some level, it's probably getting new people into positions that are making rules because there are people who are very much for themselves. What works for them instead of more of a community lens. And so I don't know how to intercept that. If that has really been working for you your whole life and if leading by that view has really gotten you where you are, I'm not sure how to intercept that. I think more importantly, for me, is how I am helping to think about ideas or have discussions with young children and families about being part of a community. How you see yourself as part of the community, how what we think about together can help bring about change. How that can be an action step. So that tends to be where I put my trust in having conversations with children and families and thinking about what change looks like going forward as opposed to, say, how am I going to convince some people who seem pretty set in their ways to shift positions?

IN: And since you mentioned that it evolved with the young kids and their families, how do you see the importance of education?

R: That's a great question because obviously as a teacher, first I think a lot about education. But the truth of the matter is that my lens sort of shifts that I feel education is important. I think more about care. And I think more about community. And so, if that's the lens that I see things through, then that guides everything I do. How do I have conversations with children that teach them about being part of a community and what that feels like and what you can get out of it and what your responsibilities are in it? How to have children and families feel seen and feel like they belong and know that they belong, so I, of course, think that education is important. I don't know anybody who would say it's not, but I think it is an important thing to think about, with children and families and with other teachers, is questioning things. I always say that that is a big part of my job. People say, well, what does that mean to be a social justice educator? And I think what it means is that I want to lead with questions. Why do we do it this way? Why does it work for some people and not others? How can we change that? What can we do with young children to shift things? So yes, education, of course, but also community building and caring about children and families and figuring out together how we change and go forward.

IN: That's great. Anything else you want to share about voting?

R: No, I'm so happy that you were here working with us. We love this partnership. Sure. Thank you.