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HEADLINE: HOW YOUNG IS TOO YOUNG?

SERIES: 1 in 8. Who's to Blame for Teen Pregnancy. First of four parts.

BYLINE: By SHARI ROAN

BODY:

Are 18-year-old married mothers part of the teen pregnancy problem?

State officials have been criticized for categorizing all teen-age pregnancy data in age 19-and-under groups. On average, about 15,000 of California's 70,000 teen births are to married women 18 and 19. "The point has been made that 19-year-olds marrying and having a baby can't be called a bad thing, according to historic views in this country," says Rep. Bill Lockyer (D-Hayward), who is heading the Democratic effort in Sacramento to address teen pregnancy this year.

"But, I think the point is, in contemporary California, postponing marriage and births is probably a sensible idea. The need for education and job skills training continues past age 18." SHARI ROAN

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