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HEADLINE: THE PICTURE IS GRIM FOR TEEN PARENTS

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BYLINE: By SHARI ROAN

BODY:

The consequences of teen parenthood are profound for the young mother and father, their baby and society.

Studies show startling repercussions:

- * Teen-age mothers and fathers are less likely to finish school than their peers.
- * Teen-age parents will make only half as much money in their lifetimes as teens who wait until age 20 to have a baby; teen parents are also more likely to live in poverty.
- * Teen parents who marry have a higher-than-average chance of divorce.
- * Babies of teen-age mothers are more likely to be born prematurely or at low birth weight and with related health problems, says the March of Dimes.
- * Babies born to teen mothers are 11% more likely to have birth defects than babies whose mothers are in their 20s, according to a recent study from the California Birth Defects Monitoring Program; one in 32 babies born to teens has a birth defect.
- * Babies born to teens are more likely to die before age 1.
- * Babies born to teens are more likely to be abused or neglected children.
- * In 1992, Medi-Cal funded more than 50% of the births to teen-agers.

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* The Aid to Families with Dependent Children and Medi-Cal cost for one teen pregnancy, childbirth and first year of support is \$10,000, according to a state Department of Health Services analysis in 1994.

* In 1993, 2,118 additional kindergarten classes were needed in California for the children who were born to teen mothers in 1987, according to the state Department of Education.

* Nationwide, more than half of AFDC payments support families in which the mother gave birth as a teen-ager, according to the Center for Population Options. SHARI ROAN

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