Principles of Play should be taught to players through coaching activities regardless of their age.

1. **Delay** - The ability to prevent the ball from being played forward quickly. A pressuring player needs to reduce the time and space of the attacker to prevent the ball being played forward. This is especially important when outnumbered to allow the team to re-shape to a loss in possession appropriately.

2. **Support (Depth)** - Reduce the space behind the pressuring player. Provide support in defence. These players do not provide pressure on the ball but instead support the challenging player. Their relative position to the pressuring player is dependent on the situation and part of the field they are supporting the player in. Defensive support is generally much tighter than attacking support.

3. **Concentration/Compactness** - The movement of players to concentrate into an area of the field vulnerable to scoring opportunities. Most teams generally drop on loss of possession and recover towards their own goal. Players should make runs back towards their own goal and goal side of the ball if desired.
4. **Balance** - In order to cancel the threat of mobility provided by the offense, balance is required by the defending team to retain defensive shape. Balancing is an extension of delay and support. Balancing players provide additional support. Be prepared to leave weak side attacking players unmarked to balance the strong side of the field.

5. **Discipline/Patience** - Defending players need to be patient and assess the risk involved in challenging for the ball. A well structured defending line can quickly become disorganized with one rash challenge. Players need to exercise control and restraint and re-adjust their shape to changing scenarios. Players also need to be alert to their surroundings at all times (switched on!).